

# Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

# FRIENDLY LINE

## January 2026



### An Invitation to Reflect on Membership

The Ministry and Counsel committee of DMVF meeting believes it would be good for our community to take some time, individually and as a meeting, to more deeply consider and reflect upon the meaning of membership in our meeting and to specifically examine the guidance in Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)'s "Faith and Practice."

*We see this as part of our committee's ministry to the community, to direct our collective attention and ask us as a body to reflect on what membership in our meeting means to the DMVF meeting and to the people who make up our community, whether or not they are formal members. We encourage each of us to approach our reflections as grounded in worship and led by Spirit, however each of us construe Spirit or worship.*

It is important to emphasize that over the more than 50 years our meeting has been here in Des Moines, many individuals have contributed to our vitality and supported the meeting community in innumerable ways. Some of these individuals were formal members of the meeting and some were not. We acknowledge that the decision to

explore and possibly seek membership is very much an individual leading. We also acknowledge that without a core group of members our Quaker meeting's identity and connection to the Religious Society of Friends would be different than it is today.

To begin, let us examine IYMC's framing and understanding of what a monthly meeting is: *The monthly meeting is the fundamental working unit of the Religious Society of Friends. It holds regular meetings for worship and business, attempting to discern and carry out the will of God. It manages its property. It receives members and oversees memorial services and marriages including the wedding ceremony. It provides spiritual care and sometimes material aid for its members.* (Page 56, IYMC Faith & Practice).

This expression of what a monthly meeting is can provide a very helpful grounding for our reflections upon membership in the meeting. We are well served to remember that every monthly meeting is different and has its own history and culture even as all are gathered within the yearly meeting and included within the global outreach and presence of

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### Thanks for gifts of winter gear

Thank you to DMV Friends who contributed warm winter gear for Iowa Homeless Youth Centers/YSS to distribute. Three large bags were delivered, plus several gift cards. Many will be warmer this cold season because of you.

### Bearing Witness, Building Hope: Love as Action - Resisting Authoritarianism

The next Love as Action event will be Saturday Jan. 17, at 11:00 a.m. All are invited to join the American Friends Service Committee and Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting to bear witness and show resistance to authoritarian actions in our country. We will gather at the corner of 42nd and Grand Avenue in Des Moines. In case of inclement weather, we will gather inside the Meeting House.

Our intent is to gather peacefully each month in communities across the as a public witness of our Quaker values in a time of rising fascism. Our hope is that our presence will give hope to all who see us – to show that we can choose resistance - and remind everyone of our moral obligations to one another. Registration is encouraged at [afsc.org/love-action](http://afsc.org/love-action), where you can find more about Love as Action nationally.

## There was no Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in December

### Membership

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and presence of the Religious Society of Friends, best known to the world as Quakers.

What does our “Faith and Practice” have to say specifically on the subject of membership?

*Membership in a monthly meeting implies an ongoing personal commitment to, and confers personal responsibility for, the well-being and good conduct of that meeting and of the wider Religious Society of Friends. In order to make that commitment and to accept that responsibility, a prospective member should have a good understanding of, and should identify closely with, the principles, testimonies and history of the Religious Society of Friends. Membership in a monthly meeting affiliated with Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) includes membership in the Yearly Meeting. Although policies of individual monthly meetings vary, membership in a monthly meeting generally confers eligibility to serve the monthly meeting, some measure of shared responsibility for the meeting’s finances and property, membership for children and eligibility for burial in the meeting cemetery, if the meeting has one. (Page 56, IYMC Faith & Practice).*

Friends, as we ponder this guidance from our Yearly Meeting, may we soften our vision and see with our hearts along with our heads. We all

cherish this very special community. The opportunity to pause and consider the meaning of membership is equally an opportunity to give loving attention to our community. How does the guidance from our “Faith and Practice” find unity with you and how you understand membership? Where are points of tension or difference? Do you see the Yearly Meeting’s guidance as prescriptive, a set of suggestions for consideration or perhaps something in between?

Turning to the process of joining a monthly meeting, such as DMVF meeting, here is the guidance from “Faith and Practice” -

*A person wishing to join a monthly meeting writes a letter requesting membership. The meeting appoints a clearness committee, which provides an opportunity to discern the readiness of the meeting and the applicant for this step, and for the committee and the applicant to become more fully acquainted. The topics below, many of which will occur naturally in the course of conversation, may serve as a guide for the committee. Their value lies in what they may reveal of the experience of both the clearness committee and the applicant in seeking and discovering those truths upon which a personal, family and group life can be built. This takes place in the spirit of a common search.*

- *What led you to Friends?*
- *What does membership mean to you?*
- *How does the meeting feel like your spiritual home?*

- *What is your sense of responsibility to the meeting?*
- *What Friends literature have you read?*
- *Have you read the Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) Faith and Practice?*
- *What is your understanding of Friends testimonies and what do they mean for your life?*
- *Membership in a monthly meeting means membership in the Religious Society of Friends. What is your understanding of the Society?*
- *How do you experience God?*
- *What have been your previous religious affiliations, and are you still a member of another church?* ((Page 56 & 57, IYMC Faith & Practice).

These 10 suggested topics for a clearness committee for membership to consider when meeting with an applicant for membership are not exhaustive. How do they work for us here in DMVF meeting? What additional or different questions or topics might be helpful to the mutual discernment that is at the heart of the membership process?

Ministry and Counsel committee encourages each of us to both spend time alone and with other Friends in consideration of and reflection upon the meaning of membership in our meeting. We hope that Friends will feel free to reach out to the committee as they may be led. Further, we hope that this will initiate and animate a deeper seeking for all the ways we seek to create a beloved community. We hope that you will share your

thoughts about this topic with Jim Dietz-Kilen, clerk of the Ministry & Counsel Committee, so your input may help inform our discernment and any recommendations that may arise.

-- by Peter Clay, on behalf of Ministry and Counsel Committee, Des Moines Valley Friends

## Query 6: Education

12/7/2025

Friends present: Billie, Susan, Dorothy, Claire, Ann, AJ

**Advice:** Friends seek an education which integrates our intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions and enables us to face difficult moral issues with courage. While the religious education of our children is primarily the concern of parents, everyone benefits when the entire meeting is concerned with nurturing them. If a spirit of common concern is present, children will gain a sense of belonging to the larger community, and, knowing they are loved and respected, will be able to face the mysteries of life with trust.

Friends promote learning throughout life and encourage freedom of thought and inquiry in all educational pursuits. Our complex and changing world demands that we learn to think and act creatively to meet its challenges.

**Query Responses:** We recognize that when these queries were written, the cultural context included broad support and adequate funding for public education, conditions that no longer necessarily hold. There are so many challenges to our educational institutions, from

what can and should be taught, to how children and teachers are being treated in schools. The need for Friends to actively support public education is greater now than it ever has been. We are concerned about the recent growth in hostility toward the process of scientific inquiry and efforts to cancel our history, removing references to progress with civil rights, for example. Some families and religious institutions may try to fill the gaps.

We recognize the importance of public education for developing active, informed citizens. Unlike private schools, public schools are obliged to provide appropriate education to students with disabilities. It is important to advocate for greater equity in funding public schools through groups such as Public School Strong.

We considered ways in which our meeting provides opportunities for attenders to attend growth-enhancing adult education opportunities, such as continued spiritual development through Pendle Hill offerings and enriching offerings for First Day school leaders. We recognize what a rich resource we have in our meeting library and discussed ways we could pursue a book club where



### Winter Carrot Soup

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 cup sliced leeks  
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and grated  
3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

Heat oil, add leeks, ginger, and garlic, and sauté until tender (not browned).

7 cups chicken stock or vegetable broth  
1 cup white wine or apple juice  
1½ pounds carrots, peeled and cut into chunks

Add stock, wine and carrots to leek mixture and simmer until carrots are tender, about 40 minutes. Cool, then puree in a food processor or blender.

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (I prefer a bit more)  
½ teaspoon curry powder  
Salt and pepper to taste.

Reheat soup, add lemon juice, curry, salt and pepper, and serve.

Makes about 2 quarts or nine servings. Recipe can be doubled. Freezes well.

*Edith Munro*

Peter Clay shared this recipe recently as good winter fare and encourages Friends to stay in touch with Edith Munro, who lives at Wesley Acres and used to be an active member of DMVF.

we could explore some of these resources in depth.

We need to listen to our young people's accounts of what their experiences at school are – what they are learning, what they want to learn but are not learning.

Critical thinking skills are essential to democratic participation. We also need to promote social and emotional learning at schools. When we are anxious or depressed, our learning is impaired. We cannot think when we're in fight or flight mode, so ignoring the emotional distress of our children leads to long lasting negative consequences. Children who lack emotional regulation skills are more likely to become parents lacking effective communication and parenting skills and the ability to respond creatively to large social challenges.

The Iowa Yearly Meeting's support of Scattergood Friends school is vital, as it is a place where people can cultivate Quaker values and experience respect for individual faith journeys.

Our meeting is enriched by the presence of our children! In first day school, we weave in Jesus' teachings as well as experiences with other faith traditions. We hope our meeting community cultivates a loving environment that encourages questioning and wondering together.

#### **Suggested changes to this Advice and Query:**

Query Reflections and Suggestions:

- Do we take an active and supportive interest in schools, libraries and other educational resources in our communities and elsewhere?
- Do we advocate for sufficient and equitable funding and resources for all public schools?
- To the query, "How do gender-based expectations affect the goals we set and the way we learn?" add, and "How do we work toward eliminating bias towards all genders?"

-- Respectfully submitted by Susan Myers

#### **Hosting Schedule**

Check out the First Day hosting schedule at the DMVF web calendar for hosting [here](#).

If you feel led to serve the meeting as a host, contact co-clerk Charlie Brown at 515-689-6470, or [charlie3501@msn.com](mailto:charlie3501@msn.com).

**A book recommendation from a Friend:** "How We Learn to be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith" by Mariann Budde, the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. The author's faith perspective is more conventional than mine – or likely many Quakers' -- but the experiences she shares are thought-provoking and very relevant to those of us who want to feel more confident in discerning and responding to leadings to take action on behalf of our values and faith.

I listened to the audiobook through the public library's Libby service, and found it extra compelling to hear it read by the author.

--- Ann Y. Robinson

#### **Upcoming Events**

**Love as Action: Resisting Authoritarianism Bearing Witness, Building Hope - AFSC Quaker Engagement;** Saturday, January 17th, 11:00 a.m. to noon, corner of 42nd and Grand (in case of inclement weather, inside the meeting house).

#### **Protective ICE**

**Accompaniment Training** Feb 12th 4pm: register for the virtual training [here](#).

#### **Mid-Year Meeting of Iowa**

**Yearly Meeting (Conservative)** will take place March 28-29, 2026, at Bear Creek Meeting near Earlham, Iowa. This year's theme will be writing and storytelling, with resource leader Carol Roh Spaulding. More details and registration information in upcoming newsletters.

#### **Des Moines Valley Friends**

**Meeting for Worship:** Sundays at 10 a.m., at the Meeting House and by Zoom via email invitation from co-clerks, Charlie Brown and Dorothy Lifka, at [clerk@desmoinesvalleyfriends.org](mailto:clerk@desmoinesvalleyfriends.org)

#### **Meeting for Worship/Business:**

Regularly held on the second First Day each month at 11:45

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

#### **Upcoming Second Hours:**

Jan. 18: Soup Sunday & Discussion of Apartheid Free Communities

Jan. 25: Day of Remembrance

**Child Care:** If you have a child who would like to be included in childcare or first day school for older youth, contact Andrea at [aandjholveck@gmail.com](mailto:aandjholveck@gmail.com).

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

**Friendly Line:** Send info for the Feb. FL by Fri, Jan. 30, to [anny.robinson1@gmail.com](mailto:anny.robinson1@gmail.com)

**Find us online at:**

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

**Check out our Facebook group** at Des Moines Valley Friends (Quakers) and our **Facebook page** at Des Moines Valley Friends - Quakers