Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting

FRIENDLY LINE

April 2026



A Life of Hope

by Billie Wade

On February 14 this year, I received the ultimate Valentine. My son and daughter-in-law delivered a special card to me, announcing I would be a first-time grandma in October. What a delightful surprise! I have been floating in the clouds ever since, and I am wearing a permanent grin. What fun I am having as I announce the event to all my friends. But before that, after my son and daughter-in-law left, I had a wave of musing as I considered what the child might do for a career, and a gazillion other questions danced through my brain. In an instant, I heard myself sound ludicrous. Then I said, "STOP!" My most fervent hope became that mom and baby would be healthy, safe, and happy. End of musing.

I learned a lot about hope as I conducted research for this blog post. My previously held belief was that hope was completely spontaneous and that one either had it in a certain circumstance or did not. "I hope I get a great parking place." "I hope the line is short at the lunch counter." "I don't see how I can ever get out of this mess." I believed hope was based in thoughts.

However, we can control our hope and, therefore, bring more of it into our lives.

We all have hope for myriad reasons—big and small, mild and serious, local and global. Hope may be there when we need it most, or it may seem as elusive as a flitting bird. Despite the turmoil swirling around us, there are ways to nurture hope in our lives.

Hope is a choice, often made in difficult times. In dark times, it is important to engage in self-care. Staying as active as possible, physically, stimulates the mind and body. Consider also activities that bring a sense of serenity into our lives. Hope is an action, a verb. We create our own hope by what we do. People who have hope are out doing things.

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Love as Action vigil in March. Photo by Jon Krieg, AFSC.

The next vigil is planned for Saturday, April 25. Find out more on page 2.

Racial Wealth Gap Simulation, April 26, Second Hour

Friends are invited make a commitment to join DMVF April 26th, from noon to 1:00 p.m., when we will participate in a racial wealth gap simulation.

Members of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement's (ICCI) Racial Justice Team have kindly made a commitment to be with our Quaker meeting to lead us in this experience meant to help reveal specific ways that "white supremacy" (a term used by "white" people in our country going back to before the U.S. Civil War to justify enslavement, imperialism and later the Jim Crow era) has prevented people of African origin living in the United States today from flourishing and succeeding.

We all are aware of "systemic racism." How many of us are fluent in describing the policies of our government that locked in limits to participation in the full life of our nation for millions of African-Americans? Educating ourselves is a critically important way to work to change this foundational moral wrong.

We need a minimum of 12 for this special opportunity. Please RSVP to peterclay1@me.com if you plan to participate, to help our facilitators prepare.

-- Peter Clay, on behalf of DMVF Peace and Social Concerns Committee

MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

There was no meeting for worship with attention to business in March. Business meetings are integral to the life and work of the committee. All are encouraged to attend the next DMVF business meeting, May 17, after our social time.

Consider Joining April's 'Love as Action' Vigil

The next "Love as Action" vigil will be held Saturday, April 25th, at 11 a.m.at the corner of 42nd and Grand Avenue.

Friends can gather early at the meeting house to make or share signs. Afterwards, all are invited to gather for a social time.

The monthly vigils have been hosted by the American Friends Service Committee and Des Moines Valley Friends. Join us to "speak" for justice and peace and against authoritarianism.

It has been special to welcome friends from other Quaker meetings and other churches (and none) who have joined us in recent months. And encouraging to have so many supportive honks and waves.

To help plan, F(f)riends are encouraged to register in advance to help estimate food needed, at: **https://www.mobilize.us/afscfriendsengagement/event/934699/** More resources can be found at **afsc.org/love-action**.

The book sale was a success!

Thanks to Deborah and Katie for coordinating, and to Andrea, Susan, Ted and Others who helped! And to All who took home books and made donations to support the DMVF library!

Report on Outreach and Communications Second Hour

The DMVF Outreach and Communications Committee held a Second Hour Feb. 22, 2026**.** Committee members are Ann Robinson, Billie Wade, Forrest Determann (who could not attend) and Katie Jacoby. Five others joined us.

Katie reviewed our activities over the past few years including written resources, participation in PrideFest, Ingersoll Live and the Comparison Project at Drake, website improvements, updated interior and exterior signage, and increases to our (modest) social media exposure.

Our next project is an IPR underwriting campaign, and, thanks to Forrest, streamlining the meeting's emails and file storage into Google Workspace.

Ann noted the committee also considers in-reach: supporting faith journeys and building community among current members/attenders and working with other committees on activities like reviving soup lunches, involvement with AFSC and supporting First Day school and childcare.

Billie then shared three short queries for the group reflection.

- **What do people seek when they walk through our doors?** What were you seeking when you first came to a Quaker meeting?
- **What keeps us coming back?** What experiences have helped you remain, return or deepen your commitment over time? Where have you experienced joy, transformation or spiritual grounding within our Quaker faith tradition? How has silence, listening and the direct experience of the Divine shaped your understanding of faith and belonging?
- **How can we share what we have?** How do we share our personal experiences, the way Friends worship and our commitment to living in ways that are a testimony to simplicity, justice, integrity, community, equality and sustainability? What can we offer in the way of activities and programs that increase our knowledge of our Quaker faith and engagement with our community?



Easter morning was lovely for an egg hunt with First Day school kids (who were moving fast and hard to capture in a photo!) Thanks to Jim and Catherine for making this fun event happen!

One Friend spoke to the movement of the spirit bringing her to Friends Meeting. She wandered in and quickly felt transformation, including a release from past feelings of guilt and shame. She felt the spiritual power of listening together in community. *How do we talk about that?*

Several mentioned the importance of connections to Iowa Yearly Meeting (spiritual

small sharing groups, and mid-year/annual gatherings, including singing and working together). A relatively new member spoke to the rich experience of learning about Quakerism through committee work and involvement at a regional and national level.

Some Friends shared how important meeting is to them, but that they also appreciate worshiping outdoors in nature, where they often feel closest to the Divine.

Often messages coming out of silent worship are intertwined. This gives a sense of the power of the Spirit working among those gathered. *That's a time when I feel like I'm in the right place*.

A new attender/friend spoke of concern over what humanity is doing as what led him to us. Other thoughts included the importance of centering love as the greatest gift of the Spirit, both in expression and how it is lived, as drawing people back.

Suggestions included sharing personal faith journeys as we have off-and-on through the years to show how the Spirit has worked/is working in us. Other suggestions for opportunities for deeper connections included a midweek adult education or book group and informal gatherings like Friendly Eights to help strengthen community. Interest was expressed in an introduction to Quakerism workshop/class; plans are underway.

Appreciation was expressed for the committee's work to increase visibility of Quakers and our Meeting to those who might be seeking community and spiritual grounding in such troubled times.

Query #10 Discussion: Environmental Responsibility
April 5, 2026

Present: Billie Wade, Peter Clay, Dorothy Lifka, Stan Sanders, Cheryl Sutton, Claire Cumbie-Drake, Mary Munteh, David Drake, Deborah Fisch, Charlie Brown, Ann Robinson, Osh Anderson

Deeper reflection on the potential impacts of every action we take leads to behavior change for many of us. If we take the time to consider the throughput impacts and outcomes for how we live our lives, we will challenge ourselves to make changes.

Each individual person can do something by making changes to help protect the Earth.

Environmental stewardship has been a focus for many of us and seeing our country going backwards now can lead to a sense of hopelessness. What about future generations? Do enough of us consider the next generation (let alone seven generations, as many Native / Indigenous Peoples do)?

Planting trees brings hope as a tangible action to help the Earth.

The geothermal system we installed for our meetinghouse and the little prairie by our meeting, along with the flowers planted nearby, are all concrete ways we, as a community, practice stewardship.

We used to have a culture in the United States that repaired and reused material things. Now we have become a throwaway society in service to profit and capitalism as it is practiced in this country. Other countries and cultures are much more mindful than our own of how everything is connected and how stewardship is essential for all life to continue.

When we consider how enormous the universe is and how small each one of us is, it helps put in focus what each of us can do. Small things do matter. In aggregate, all the small, imperfect actions we take can make a difference. They certainly change us by our choices to be more mindful. For example, by considering our consumer choices. The Collective shop in Des Moines was mentioned as one local place to buy products in bulk and in glass or reused containers.

An example is how we use water. We can capture grey water or other household water to be used for gardens or flushing toilets. We can switch to natural laundry detergents that are much better for the environment. There are a myriad of ways to change our habits of daily living to reduce negative impacts on the planet.

Think of yourself as an ant. We could be crushed anytime. Think of all the ways human actions cause harm to the Earth. Recycling was not something there was political will to accomplish at first. That changed.

The imbalances in the natural world caused by human actions are real and destructive of life. As we are faithful to the Light that we have, we, like the ants, can carry our leaves back to the nest. We can re-learn

or learn for the first time how to be faithful to living in harmony with the rest of creation. Doing what each of us can do is important, regardless of the outcomes.

The joy and self-nurturing that accompanies making beautiful gardens to grow flowers, food and to support pollinators changes each of us in a good way!

Local actions are important. Even if we struggle to be hopeful or optimistic, we must do what we can.

The lack of engagement by Iowa government in the existential threat of toxic drinking water is astonishing. Iowa is a dangerous and unhealthy state to live in. Not all of us can afford a reverse osmosis nitrate filtration system. How do we respond to this as individuals and as a community?

We all like our "creature comforts" yet we also know that these will not be what will ultimately bring us a sense of wholeness; of satisfaction in the lives we lead.

How does cultural appropriation interact with the seeking for a deeper spiritual life? Looking at other cultures than the dominant white culture in the United States we see an ethos of living with, and feeling responsible for, the health of the Earth. Those who are able to live more deeply connected to the Earth and with a powerful spiritual connection to her inspire many of us, while we also seek to be sensitive to cultural appropriation.

We DO have choices- in how we live, in what we buy and in what kind of future we wish to create.

Plastics in the shared environments of Mother Earth are a terrible problem but for some people the option to use plastic for some purposes was a plus when they first appeared – or possibly even still in some cases. How can we find the balanced way forward that respects life?

"Good" people do most of the "bad things" that humans do. There is so much complexity to being a human!

A new attender said our conversation was inspiring to her. She shared the idea that "We ARE the Earth" as a profound way to think about our presence here. When we look around at the state of the Earth we become aware that the degradation of the planet is simultaneously our own degradation. There is a profound disconnection between humans and Mother Earth that many of us experience. Can we "digest" our experience as humans to come to a fuller, truer understanding of who we are? Can we reawaken to what Mother Earth has to teach us?

For same, it feels safe/safer to be among trees! Trees are other beings who share the Earth with us. What do trees have to teach us about how all life is connected and mutually interdependent?

-- Recorded by Peter Clay

A Life of Hope

(*continued from page 1*)

Hope is crucial to human survival and affects our ability to thrive. Without it, we die mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. People with hope are healthier and happier than people without it. People who have hope take better care of themselves—dietary, exercise, rest, recreation—and have higher self-esteem overall.

Of course, there are countless situational hopes: injuries, losses of every kind. Still, people with an attitude of hope in their daily lives are stronger.

Hope is the by-product of conscious choice and intentional action toward a better life. It does not mean life will be perfect or that a specific, desired outcome will come to fruition. What it means is that over time, the energy poured into the circumstance will result in resilience and the resolve to go on.

Nurturing hope in oneself and others can be a challenge. Current events affect all of us globally as individuals. When we are stuck in what feels like a spiral of hopelessness, we can acknowledge our feelings and sit with them without allowing them to devour us. Recognize them for what they are—feelings; they are not reality. Hopelessness is usually an unwanted, uncomfortable guest. We can try to find something we enjoy, sending hopelessness packing. Other ways to find hope in our lives are through journaling, talking with a trusted friend or professional, or getting involved in an activity we enjoy. It is critical to know that we never have to deal with hopelessness alone.

We are living in an era of high stress in our own backyards and globally and everywhere

in between. When stressful times are layered over the vagaries of everyday living, finding hope can feel daunting. During these dark times, community becomes central. Connecting with other people to work toward a better future fosters hope in everyone.

This is true whether the matter at hand is personal or international. Here are some ways communities can come together.

- If not already in place, find groups of like-minded people: church, neighborhood, family, friends, affinity groups, etc.
- Remember, hope thrives on activity. Offer to care for one another, such as running an errand.
- Share stories of hope. Have fun. Laugh.
- Limit negative exposure; balance with positive.
- Acknowledge circumstances without trying to "fix" each other.
- Stay grounded in the present moment and try to set a daily goal of getting through the day, living one day at a time.

Even small amounts of Compassion and Grace go a long way when we encounter seemingly grumpy or thoughtless people. A usually cheerful person may make a snarky comment, or someone may rudely let a door slam in our face, or a friend may forget to acknowledge receipt of a birthday card. Most people, including us, are not intentionally mean. But, as we saw above, everyone is living with a lot of stress, which can cause us to feel tired, frustrated, stressed out and absent-minded. So, we can be kind even when it appears the other person doesn't deserve it. Maybe they need a sliver of hope in their day. And it will certainly keep a smile of hope in ours.

Hope is a conscious choice we make to create a better life for ourselves, those around us, and the world in which we live. With others, we take intentional action toward our goals, knowing the outcome may differ from our vision, but knowing we will be strengthened and more resilient because of our efforts. Because of that, we have hope.

Thank you to the Peace & Social Concerns Committee for sponsoring a second hour recently to hear a powerful presentation by Amy Gottieb, AFSC 's U.S. Migration Director. Friends can listen to a session of "Thee Quaker" podcast that features Amy and AFSC's work in support of immigrants at: **https://quakerpodcast.com/mobilizing-quakers-for-immigration-justice-with-afsc/**

Upcoming Events

April 19 – Share a talent - or an interest - at the DMVF Talent Show second hour.
July 22-26 Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative Yearly Meeting at Grinnell College.

Hosting Schedule

Apr. 12 – Jim & Catherine
Apr 19 – Steve & Kari
Apr. 26 – Ann & Ted
May 3 – Peter & Andrea

You can view the hosting schedule at the DMVF web calendar for hosting **here**.

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

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business: Held on the second First Day each month at 11:45 a.m.

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

Upcoming Second Hours:
April 19 – Talent show & light lunch
April 26 – Wealth Gap Simulation
May 17 – Soup Sunday

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.

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

Friendly Line: Send info for the Feb. FL by Fri, May 1, to 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 (separate) **Facebook page** at Des Moines Valley Friends – Quakers