

VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING: TIMELINE – April 2022

- Fall 1979** The families of Rowan and Todd Zeiss, William and Kathryn Jones and Samuel and Beverly Moore gathered for worship and fellowship at the Zeiss' home in Harrisonburg, VA. They decided to begin meeting weekly as an informal worship group. As more families joined them, worship was divided between the Zeiss home and the home of Maria Prytula.
- May 1983** With the advice of Friends Jay Worrall and Chick Moran of Charlottesville Friends Meeting, the group decided to become a Preparative Meeting under the care of Charlottesville Friends Monthly Meeting. The name Harrisonburg Monthly Meeting was agreed upon. Regional affiliation is with Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and Virginia Half Years Meeting.
- November 1983** Friends decided the size of the group required a larger meeting space be sought.
- June 1984** Meeting for Worship was moved to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Dale Enterprise (now the Unitarian Universalist Church). Meeting was held at 5 p.m.
- May 1986** Harrisonburg Friends was granted Monthly Meeting status by Baltimore Yearly Meeting.
- May 1987** Decision was made to affiliate 100% with both FGC and FUM.
- April 1988** A Meeting place search committee was formed as Friends were finding the 5p.m. worship time was a problem for some and especially families with young children.
- September 1994** A Meetinghouse fund was added to the budget..
- June 1997** Augusta Friends Worship Group requested to be under the care of Harrisonburg Monthly Meeting.

Harrisonburg Friends helped host the FGC Gathering at James Madison University.
- January 2000** The former Dayton Presbyterian Church, built in 1898, was purchased from the Town of Dayton at auction for \$66,000. Harrisonburg Friends continue to be grateful to Friends from London Grove Meeting in Pennsylvania for their generous gift that helped, along with others, to make this purchase possible. Extensive clean up and restoration began.
- April 2000** The first Meeting for Worship was held at the Dayton Meetinghouse.

- June 2000** Two open house celebrations were held; one for contributing Friends and one for the local community.
- August 2000** The name of the Meeting was changed to “Valley Friends Meeting.”
- April 2003** After many months of deliberation, an ad hoc committee was formed to draft a pamphlet explaining the process and decision to retain and repair the stained-glass windows.
- April 2006** A Peace Pole, lovingly crafted by Dave Moyer, was placed in front of the Meetinghouse displaying the prayer “May Peace Prevail on Earth” in English, Spanish, Russian, Kurdish, Urdu, and Ukrainian, the five most spoken languages of students in Harrisonburg Schools at the time. Hebrew, Latin, Hindi, Chinese and Arabic representing five of the world’s great religions were included and the animal kingdom is represented by paw prints.
- Since 2006, Valley Friends has made a scholarship available each year for a student attending the Summer Peace Building Institute at Eastern Mennonite University.
- January 2007** Stained glass window repair and restoration was completed.
- October 2013** Approved Valley Friends Meeting Child Protection Policy.
- A weekly Mindfulness Meditation Group, open to the community, was started and continued meeting with various leaders until 2019.
- August 2014** A Minute on Climate Change was approved and possible solarizing of Meetinghouse considered.
- October 2014** A committee to be formed to consider reducing our carbon footprint – an article appeared in the local newspaper featuring the Climate Change Minute.
- November 2014** Approved the fUN School request to use the building for a small home school group; fulfilling the desire to have the building used more than one day a week.
- November 2016** A new electric heat pump was installed to replace the aged oil furnace and further reduce our carbon footprint.
- April 2017** Valley Friends joined Faith in Action. With this organization, along with the local Interfaith Alliance, we work to ensure the voice of the people is heard by local officials.
- February 2018** The proposed Solar Power Purchase Agreement was accepted by Sigora Solar.
- March 2018** Renovation of two bathrooms was completed.

- November 2018** 34 Solar panels were installed on the roof of the Meeting further reducing our carbon footprint.
- June 2019** Solar celebrations were held to celebrate and encourage the use of solar energy. Contributions were made to “Give Solar” a local organization installing solar panels on area non-profits and Habitat for Humanity homes.
- April 2020** Due to spread of the Covid Virus, Meetings for Worship held outdoors. When weather requires, Meetings for Worship held on Zoom.
- September 2021** Meeting for Worship resumed indoors, with masks, committees were reorganized, Worship Meetings for Business, Bible study and Friendly Chats continue on Zoom.
- December 2021** Our annual evening Christmas Candlelight service was joyfully resumed.
- January 2022** LIVING IN THE LIGHT (2021): VFM’s Third-Year Solar Report
Valley Friends Meeting now has three full years of experience with solar energy. How’re we doing? By relying primarily on renewable energy, VFM has eliminated 65,000 pounds of CO2 that would otherwise have been spewed into the atmosphere. Looked at another way, 492 trees would need to be planted to suck up the same amount of carbon dioxide that VFM has NOT emitted.

Our small community has appreciated this opportunity to reflect and acknowledge these past years. We look forward to worshipping and working together toward a world that is peaceful and equitable to all.

Minute on Climate Change

Valley Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Amended and approved 10/9/2016

Valley Friends Meeting is a (Quaker) community of faith dedicated to peace, justice, and right relationships: with the divine presence, with fellow human beings, with fellow creatures, and with the Earth. We affirm that right relationships -- of all forms -- are rooted in attitudes of respect rather than domination.

“The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we will shall have for destruction”. – Rachel Carson

Confession: We embrace the wisdom that human beings are integral to the web of life rather than independent from it. We grieve, recognizing that, by living out of harmony with one another and the natural world, humanity has severely damaged the web on which life depends.

We honor the insights of scientists and the revelations of our own senses, both of which reveal with ever-increasing certainty and clarity the devastation that our unsustainable ways of living have inflicted upon the biosphere, especially through the destabilization of the Earth’s climate. We confess that humankind’s over-reliance on fossil fuels, extreme methods of resource extraction, widespread destruction of old-growth and rain forests, and over-consumption of natural resources are largely responsible for the Earth’s degraded state and climate disruption.

Moreover, because climate change disproportionately affects the world’s most impoverished peoples and has contributed to international conflicts and genocide, our commitments to peace and justice, as well as our commitment to care for the Earth, compel us to restorative action.

Restoration: We seek authentic, loving connections to Nature and to one another. Therefore, we commit ourselves, individually and collectively, to the process of restoring right-relationship with the Earth and to stabilizing the Earth’s climate. As conscience dictates, we will support and/or engage in actions such as the following: further education regarding climate change and sustainable living, conservation, downsizing our standards of living, reducing our carbon footprints, investing in renewable energy, and divesting from fossil fuels.

While we recognize that such efforts by individuals and local communities are important, they alone are insufficient to effect climate stabilization. Therefore, we support comprehensive and concerted remedial and mitigative climate actions by state and national governments, and we will encourage our political representatives to take such actions by community education, by individual and collective

lobbying, and, if necessary, by peaceful protest as conscience dictates.

Invitation: We are convinced that the problem of climate change is real, significant, worsening, and urgent. With this minute, we add the voice of Valley Friends Meeting to a growing chorus -- from science, from communities of faith, and from the general public -- to call for immediate attention to the climate at all levels: personal, community, national, and international.

Although the challenge posed by climate change is complex and may seem daunting, we are called to action that is grounded in creative faith and supported by community. We invite other faith communities, individuals, and groups to endorse this minute and, for the sake of future generations, join us in this ongoing effort to heal ourselves and the planet.

Valley Friends Meeting

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