

Summary of Peace and Social Concerns Reports to Yearly Meeting

Reports submitted by West Branch, Penn Valley, Iowa City, Decorah, Omaha, Bear Creek, Lincoln and Paulina meetings.

Monthly meetings continue to respond to issues concerning peace and justice. Many rely on the leadership of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), advocating for funding for federal peacekeeping programs that identify and support local leaders in conflict areas to proactively deal with issues that may escalate into violence.

Meetings also form relationships with other organizations with like-minded objectives such as Veterans for Peace, Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT), Interfaith Light and Power, People 2 People (P2P), Alternatives to Violence (AVP), Braver Angels and others. Local programs like food pantries and free clinics as well as peace vigils were part of most meetings outreach.

Recurring themes of the Peace and Social Concerns reports highlight the treatment of indigenous people particularly their treatment in forced boarding school attendance. Many of those schools were supported by Quakers. Meetings also participated in specific tribal issues with Lincoln establishing a fund to help with indigenous people's programs.

Women's reproductive rights became an issue after Roe vs Wade was overturned. FCNL requested assistance in determining a policy for national legislation. Some meetings were able to work together lovingly to share their experiences and guide FCNL towards a policy statement.

A concern for groups such as the LGBTQ+ community and immigrants prompted meetings to engage in supportive efforts of inclusion. Bear Creek and Penn Valley are actively involved in helping a single emigrating family, one of whom was a Scattergood graduate, to be reunited in Canada. West Branch meeting is supporting Open Heartland which works with the needs of immigrant families by volunteering monthly. West Branch and other meetings have begun to be concerned about state responses to vulnerable groups. These state issues may warrant a Quaker advocacy response.

Changing the polarized political atmosphere was taken up by Iowa City meeting by hosting a workshop run by Braver Angels. Some Penn Valley attenders are working with Better Ballot KC to bring about rank choice voting.

Iowa City Meeting was uniquely concerned with the influence of pharmaceutical companies in government health policies. The war in Ukraine was also a concern. An informational presentation is in planning.

Guided by the spirit, both individual Quakers and meetings "see what Love can do" love in both their communities and the wider world.