

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

March 2026



How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things which are eternal, bear the burden of each other's failings and pray for one another. As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other's lives, ready to give help and to receive it, our meeting can be a channel for God's love and forgiveness.

Advices and Queries #18

Upcoming Events and Announcements

A booklet of poetry written by Canadian Quakers is currently in development in collaboration with CYM Publications. Information about potential submissions can be found at: <https://quaker.ca/quaker-blog/call-for-submissions-for-a-collection-of-poetry-from-canadian-friends-francais-english/> (not a hyperlink, cut and paste in browser)

Job Opportunity: Canadian Yearly Meeting is looking to hire for an Accountant & Operational Support position. This new full-time position, based in Ottawa, is responsible for maintaining CYM's financial records and providing operational support for legal requirements. Please find more information [at this link](#) and share it with anyone you know. The application deadline is 9 am on March 6, 2026.

There is a monthly Zoom support group (hosted by Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting) for those who are disabled and/or dealing with chronic illnesses, and those who support them. They meet at noon/12 pm Pacific time/3 pm Eastern time on the 4th Saturday of every month, for half an hour of worship and then one hour of sharing and support. All Friends are invited to join -- please contact Pashta MaryMoon at quaternalmoon13@gmail.com to be put on the notification list.

The State of Society report will be distributed with the minutes of the March 1 Meeting for Worship for Business. Members and attenders are encouraged to submit comments and suggestions to members of Ministry and Counsel.

The next meeting of the Reading Group will be on Sunday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m. in our Zoom space. Please contact Shirla (shirla766@gmail.com) to be added to the participant list.

The next Meeting for Worship for Business will be held in person at the Meeting House on Sunday, March 29 at 12:30 p.m. You can also join us online on our regular Meeting Zoom link.

The Soil of My Soul

by Shauna Doracin

How do we care for one another,
If we do not care for ourselves?
How do we exercise compassion with others,
Without first coming to terms
With the endless expanse
Of our internal awareness?

How do we forgive?
How do we understand?
How do we grow?
Allow growth in others,
Facilitate that growth,
While planted in a medium
Devoid of nutrients?

The soil of my soul
Lies cold and fallow,
Awaiting the Love
That can only be received
After first being exercised.

Brought into being,
Cradled carefully
And offered openly,
First to myself,
And then to the world.

We Inspire Each Other

by Sheldon H. Clark

Our friend, Jeff Nicholls of Kent, drove Joan and me to Canterbury Cathedral in October, 1983. We were inspired to go because of having read in school, *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1387–1400), *Murder in the Cathedral*, by T.S. Eliot (1935), and *Becket, or The Honour of God*, by Jean Anouille (1959). These renditions portrayed Archbishop Thomas Becket and King Henry II in the ancient struggle between spiritual and secular power. I was intrigued because I had played Becket in the 1963 Hiram College production of Anouille’s play. Jeff, Joan, and I were aware that for 850 years people had prayed at this UNESCO World Heritage site.

We enjoyed the benefit of a beautiful sunny fall day, few tourists, and the happiness of making the pilgrimage together to this place of worship. The actual spot of Becket’s martyrdom on December 29, 1170, made us pause to remember that violence happens not only to the rich, well-born, and able, but also to ordinary people, aka ‘collateral damage’, and can emerge as unexpectedly from the darkness as the Light of God’s Grace. Today, only a simple stone in the North-West Transept marks the spot where Becket was killed. We paused at a tiered bank of burning candles. Each of us quietly lit a votary in memory of our respective deceased relatives and bowed our heads. Joan experienced the bombing of Newcastle, 1940/1941, as a child, and Jeff had walked through the rubble left from the London Blitz. Joan and I were inspired by Jeff’s friendship, our private memories, and we were thankful for our peaceful lives.

Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and the spontaneity of “random kindness and senseless acts of beauty” draw members and attenders together in silent worship. ‘Expect the unexpected, and be pleasantly surprised’ is the mantra. The enjoyment of deep silent worship as a community of faith lovingly unfolds as it will. Contemplative worship is sometimes enriched by vocal ministry, respectful reflections that bear witness to Truth, and from the distraction of seeing dancing shadows on the walls teasing out possible meanings between imagination and reality. What may “speak” to

one, may not “speak” to another. Quiet active worship embraces all. There is no decorative iconography, liturgy, and the furnishings are arranged as democratically as possible. Devout expectancy, separating the essential from the incidental, provokes mystical moments. Some Friends recommend spiritual thoughts they discover in reading inspirational material. Other Friends find happiness in sharing the joy of work. Several examples are golden.

Harriet Woodside in the *Hamilton Quaker Newsletter*, December 2024, recalled in, ‘Retreat Reflections,’ the making of sticky buns, seeing Betty Preston lead the game, ‘Beetle Drive’, and young people painting camp cabins, mystically drawing children and adults together in the joy of common endeavour.

In *Healing from the Heart* (1998), by Rochelle Gram, Flora Litt, and Wayne Irwin, wisdom abounds. One example from Chapter 7, ‘The Power of Prayer,’ is: “In laying bare our own heart, mind, and motives before God, we ourselves will be increasingly transformed. We not only gain self-understanding, but understanding and compassion for others. And our inner attitudes will affect our prayer for and with others” (p. 130). Meeting for worship develops inner prayer, which may lead to further appreciation for the condition of others.

In his poem ‘Heart to Heart,’ from *Fire Voices* (2022), Sheldon Clark wrote: “Seminal horizons call to Find the way to the Way. Wealth, power, position do not reveal Truth. Expect abundance, new life. Encounter integrity, harmony, radiant beauty. Struggle. Emerge, then soar. Discover *cor ad cor loquitur*,” having a heart to heart with God. My ESR Quakerism professor, and personal friend, John Punshon (1935-2017), identified ‘Integrity’ as foundational to all of the Quaker Testimonies. May our private prayers be ‘heart to heart’ with the Spirit. The gathered meeting for worship is open to everyone for a Divine encounter.

From Paul Dekar’s *In Journeying with Hope into a New Year: Reflections for Advent and Christmas* (2022), comes this inspiring sentence: “A line in *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupery summarizes a crucial idea informing this (Advent) collection: “And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the

eye.” Simplicity is one of the Quaker Testimonies. Let us prepare our hearts to be receptive to the Spirit.

In the recent *Hamilton Quaker Newsletter*, February 2026, Beverly Shepard expressed the second element of the Christian virtues (I Corinthians 13:13) in her poem, ‘New Year 2026’, which concludes by sharing what it means to be in front of her living room fire: “In this room, / where we are gathered, / joyful, loving, and warm, / we are the symbol and seed / of the way the world may be saved, by union / caring / hope.” One could imagine ‘this room’ is our meeting house worship room, and that we, too, are ‘seeds for hope’.

Quaker Concern Vol. 52, No. 1, Winter 2026 HMM Friend and CFSC’s General Secretary, Jennifer Preston wrote: “I stumbled across a Maya Angelou quote, “My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who and how you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness. Continue to allow humour to lighten the burden of your tender heart”.” This is a delightful statement of reassurance. It speaks to the vision Friends have for goodness to prevail.

Whether travelling abroad, listening to spoken ministry, socializing after Meeting for Worship, sharing words of inspiration from a variety of resources, or from direct encounter, we bring our unique experiences and gifts to enrich the contemplative worship experience. We are ‘mystically’ refreshed by worshipping together. We feel reassured to be instruments of peace, justice, faith, hope, and charity. We inspire each other.



About this Newsletter / Submission Guidelines

This Newsletter is a monthly publication of news and announcements relevant to Hamilton Quakers.

It is also a venue for members and attenders to share creative works or articles they have written on subjects that may be of interest to our Quaker community. As a general guideline we are looking for submissions that are inspirational and related to Quaker concerns, as well as announcements and news. Members and Attenders are encouraged to submit works for the newsletter.

Requests for newsletter items are announced after Meeting for Worship and/or via email during the week before Meeting for Worship for Business. They are due by the Friday before Business Meeting. Submission of materials implies permission to publish. Copyright for original material resides with the author.

If the person submitting the article is unknown to the editor or if there are questions as to whether the article will be appropriate for the Quaker newsletter, the editor will consult with the clerk(s) who will together discern what will be included. Written permission to publish must be obtained from the copyright holder if a submission is not the original work of the submitter, unless the works are in the public domain, or are covered under the creative commons license.

Hamilton Meeting reserves the right to edit submissions for length or content in consultation with the authors. Please limit submissions to a maximum of 750 words. When opinion pieces are included a line will be added indicating "Submissions reflect the opinions of their authors, and not necessarily of Hamilton Monthly Meeting".

Submissions should be directed to the current editor, Síân Reid, daywitch@gmail.com.

We acknowledge the land upon which Hamilton Friends Meeting House is located as the shared traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt covenant. This historic peace agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibwe, and allied nations represents a commitment to share and protect the land, water, plants, and animals, with respect. It is the privilege of Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to share in the tradition of stewardship of this land, which has been the environment of human beings in this territory for thousands of years. We honour the original Peoples of this land and express a commitment to and gratitude for the opportunity to work together toward restorative justice and reconciliation.