

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

January 2026



Do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be your part. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking, even very briefly, may open the way to future ministry from others. When prompted to speak, wait patiently to know that the leading and the time are right, but do not let a sense of your own unworthiness hold you back. Pray that your ministry may arise from deep experience, and trust that words will be given to you. Try to speak audibly and distinctly, and with sensitivity to the needs of others. Beware of speaking predictably or too often, and of making additions towards the end of a meeting when it was well left before.

Advices and Queries #13

Upcoming Events and Announcements

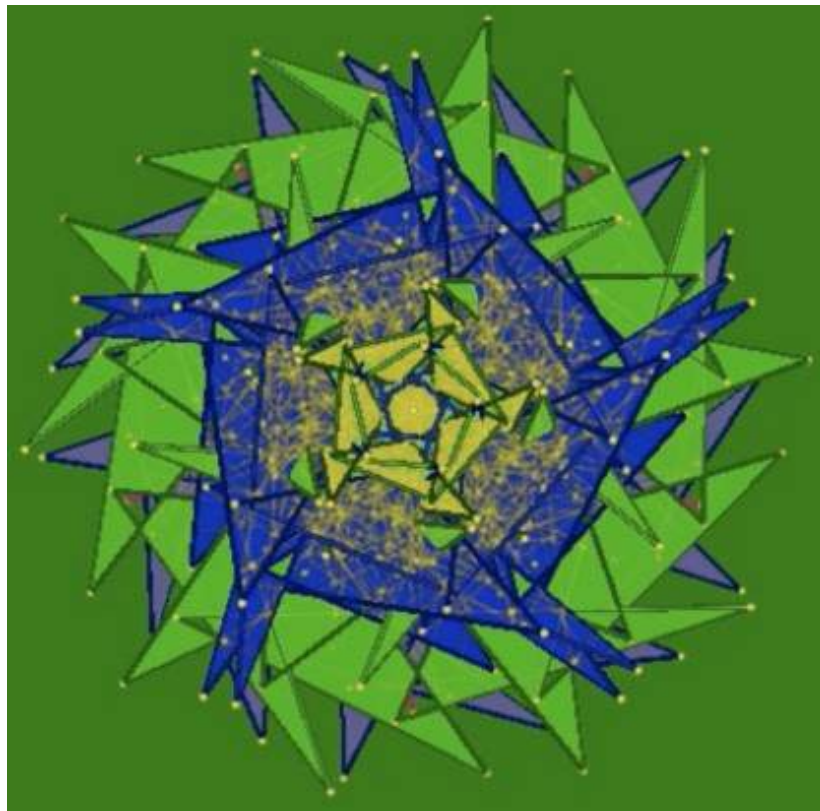
It is with sadness that we announce that Gary Peters, formerly a long time attender at Hamilton Monthly Meeting, and father of members Anna and Luc Peters, died on December 21, 2025. Funeral will be held on Friday, January 16 at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Rosary Catholic Church, 287 Plains Road E., Burlington.

We are looking for a microwave and a printer for the upstairs space at the Meeting House. If anyone has one of these that are surplus to requirements, could you please let Alice Preston (alicepreston956@gmail.com) know.

The next meeting of the Reading Group will be on Sunday, January 25, 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, February 1 at 12:30 p.m. You can also join us online on our regular Meeting Zoom link.

Image below by Kate Mackrell



Refreshments

Have you considered signing up for refreshments?

These traditionally have been as simple as making coffee and tea, bringing milk/cream and something to nibble on. It does not need to be a feast.

Including something for our Gluten-free Friends is always appreciated and there are GF cookies, or apple slices etc. There are always friends willing and available to help, and of course signing up with a buddy makes it extra fun!

If the cost is a barrier, reimbursement with a receipt is available.

Oh, and don't forget the washing up. Bubbles are a wonderful stress buster!



Suggestions Needed!

At the January 4th Meeting for Business with attention to Business, we received a Report from the ad hoc group (Caileigh Morrison, Jane MacKay Wright, Pete Cross, Jenn Preston) to discuss surplus Meeting funds. Hamilton Monthly Meeting has a surplus of \$65,000. We should put this money to good use.

They have suggested that Maintenance and Garden Committee identify any major/costly pressing needs for Hamilton Friends House, believing that monies should first be used for this purpose.

Other ways to use this money include:

1. Community bonds - Hamilton Monthly Meeting presently has \$15,000 invested with Indwell for supportive housing. Community bonds are socially-useful investments which earn interest. The money, in theory, is returned to the Meeting. We do not know of other local community bonds being offered at this time that meet our charitable purposes.
2. Local charities - Small local charities could benefit greatly from donations, including the ones we already give to.

Much of the Meeting's surplus funds arise out of a legacy from John Milton. As he enjoyed kayaking at Camp NeeKauNis, we could provide funds to purchase a kayak in his honour.

We ask Meeting members to consider these choices and contact members of the ad hoc group with any further suggestions. The ad hoc committee will continue its discernment once it has heard back from the Maintenance and Garden Committee.

Please send any ideas in writing to one or all of the members of the committee for their consideration.

Spiritual Intentions

by Siân Bowen-Cole

It's hard to believe I'm part way through my third year as your clerk. It has certainly been a learning curve, but one that has come with a great deal of kindness, care and support. I appreciate that I have been able to be myself in this role and not feel confined to expectations or a certain way of doing things -- Quaker procedure aside!

I do realize that sometimes I have ideas in my head which I just do, without communicating the thought behind them. There is spiritual intention, although it may not seem so. Take, for example, the quote at the beginning of the Agenda for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. I try to find quotes that speak not only to me, but which I hope may have meaning for others as well. I believe they may be helpful to us when we read the agenda and hold in the Light the business meeting, or those who are present when we cannot be.

In doing this, I became aware that there are many quotes from past Quakers who were men, and fewer from female Quakers. That probably has a lot to do with the opportunities for education and the division of labour over the centuries. Despite this, I realized that in the *Faith and Practice* of Britain Yearly Meeting most of the more academic commentaries are by men and those arising out of experience more frequently by women.

One of the early quotations I used was from Caroline Fox. It was a phrase I first encountered on the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage back in 1983, when I met Susan Stark, a Quaker songwriter who had used it in one of her songs, "Live up to the Light, the Light that thou hast, and more will be granted thee." These words have encouraged me over the years as I try to live my faith each day. This month's agenda includes a quote from Rufus Jones, encouraging us to look for beauty, because it is a reminder of our kinship with the creator. I lived about half of my life with a person who was unable to find joy in a good cup of coffee, a beautiful view or a simple flower. Perhaps that is why I realize how fortunate I am that I have always been able to recognize beauty, joy and hope however tiny

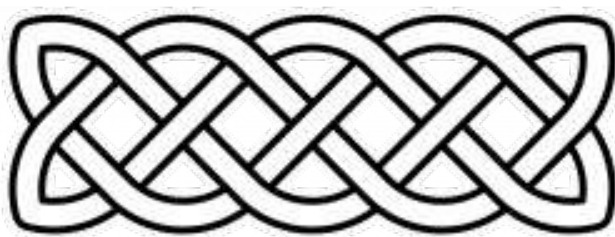
the spark may be, and wherever it may flourish. Perhaps a weedy flower that has pushed itself up between paving stones, or a ladybug on a stem.

I thought of the quotation this morning as I read about the attack in Venezuela. I wondered what people would think about reading words about beauty when there is so much horror in the world. Yet, that is exactly why we need to be reminded. There is Light, there is hope and there is beauty, and these are things that sustain us as we continue to work for peace and justice.

Caroline Fox (1819–1871) wrote in her journal at the age of 21, of ‘the struggle through which a spark of true faith was lighted in my soul’: The first gleam of light, ‘the first cold light of morning’ which gave promise of day with its noontide glories, dawned on me one day at meeting, when I had been meditating on my state in great depression. I seemed to hear the words articulated in my spirit, ‘Live up to the light thou hast, and more will be granted thee.’ Then I believed that God speaks to man by His Spirit. I strove to lead a more Christian life, in unison with what I knew to be right, and looked for brighter days, not forgetting the blessings that are granted to prayer. *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.04

“And yet beauty has no function, no utility. Its value is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It is its own excuse for being. It greases no wheels, it bakes no puddings. It is a gift of shared grace, a gratuitous largesse. It must imply behind things a Spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and that floods the world everywhere with it. Wherever it can break through, it does break through, and our joy in it shows we are in some sense kindred to the giver and revealer of it all.”

Rufus Jones, 1920 *Quaker Faith and Practice* 26.32



Consider...

by Beverly Shepard

A large boulder sits in the shade of a cedar tree. The seasons change; dirt blows onto the top of the rock; moss spores blow into the dirt. Moss begins to grow on top of the boulder. It doesn't require nutrients from the soil, only help in binding it to the rock surface, and the tiny rhizoids (anchoring structures) cling first to the dirt but then may find their way into minute crevices in the rock.

A seed of another plant falls onto the moss. There it lies on a soft bed of organic material, apparently ideal for germination. The seed germinates and sends tiny roots into the moss, the soil below it, and the minute fissures of the rock (now conveniently filled with more organic material). The cedar ages; a strong wind one winter breaks it off and casts it to earth.

The seedling, or one just like it, now has sunlight to help it grow, and breezes can blow more dust particles onto the rock. The roots strengthen and reach for the soil beneath the boulder. The fissures which permitted the first entrance of the rootlets are the weak points in the rock, and they are under pressure now. A piece of the boulder breaks away, pushed apart from the main rock by the force of the growing sapling. Bits of broken rock that fall to the soil are slowly dissolved by the rain into the soil, providing minerals to nourish the young tree and other plants.

Such processes may take years or generations, but what was once a large boulder may become smaller rocks and a tree. Perhaps the tree is an apple tree, and a person may come along and eat an apple. A part of the boulder has now become a part of a person. The person, I affirm, has a spirit. Does the boulder?

Quaker Legacy

by Sheldon H. Clark

George Fox (1624-1691) lived his faith by worshiping God, and following the Golden Rule honestly. Fox did not initiate a theological school, nor write down specific rules of conduct. Quakerism devolved from the trappings of the liturgical church to gather in quiet unadorned meetinghouses. Worshipers listened for the stirrings of “that of God” or “the Inner Light”. Three-hundred and seventy-four years of Quakerism continues to embrace constancy and adaptability. “Quakers have little theology, but they take it seriously.”

Quaker Legacy did not begin with George Fox in 1652. Like the action of a play, background information sets the stage.

A Prologue might mention Martin Luther’s posting of his 95-Thesis on the church door in Wittenberg (1517), launching the Protestant Reformation. Then, 130 years later, the initial dramatic moment occurs when 23-year-old George Fox heard the voice of Christ. The stage is set on a desolate hillside. Alone, Fox utters a soliloquy.

When all my hopes in them and in all men, were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do; then, O! then I heard a voice which said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition;” and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Thus, when God doth work, who shall hinder it? and this I knew experimentally.

George Fox is a person of heroic proportion. He crosses the threshold of doubt and experiences multiple trials. He leads by precept and example. He is imprisoned as a conscientious objector willing to act and die for his beliefs. His character is courageous, patient, mystical, joyful, and persuasive. His personality is loving, kind, and compassionate. His calling is as a pacifist, organizer, social reformer, author, and preacher of the gospel of love as a Seeker of Truth. Eventually, he preaches throughout England, the Caribbean, and several American colonies.

In 1661, Quakers were suspected of sedition. Fox wrote to Charles II a formal statement articulating the Peace Testimony:

That the spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

Fox is not without controversy. He is opinionated, engendering keen opposition within the Religious Society of Friends. To his credit, Fox left a legacy of an organizational structure for future generations to use and develop.

Fox experienced discomfort, frugality, and yet, found solace in convincing others about living a simple faith based on the belief there is “that of God” in everyone. The doctrine of the ‘Inner Light’ is born. Unmediated access to God threatened the established church. In truth, Fox is bodily tossed out of churches, remanded for disobeying social class and court etiquette, sentenced for blasphemy, and for disturbing the public peace. Whether on the road, visiting strangers, incarcerated, or living at Swarthmore Hall, Fox and his followers were able to influence diverse levels of society. Fox spent a total of six years in various prisons for disrupting church services, accusations of blasphemy, refusal to swear “to tell the Truth” (no double standard), to observe ‘hat honour’ in court, holding illegal Quaker meetings, and the perception others had of him as a political radical.

Fox lived through turbulent times of social, economic, political, and religious upheaval. The English Civil War (1642-1651), the trial and execution of Charles I (1649), the Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell (1653-1659), the Restoration of Charles II (1660-1685), the Great Fire of London (1666), and the Glorious Revolution (1688) followed hard one upon the other. This sequence of events saw limitations to temporal power and transformed people’s perception of themselves and society.

A constitutional monarchy subject to Parliament, and the enactment of the Act of Toleration (1689) were transformational. Earlier, Charles II established the Royal Society (1662). The Royal Society's motto '*Nullius in verba*' translates, 'take nobody's word for it'. Members were committed to disregard outside interference and to verify theories by an appeal to facts verified by experimentation. This prominent secular institution advocated the scientific method as its approach to seeking truth. Restoration drama reopened with a liveliness revelling in naughtiness let loose after the Puritan ban on theatres was lifted. Science, drama, art, poetry, and Quakerism engaged independently in the pursuit of Truth. The Age of Enlightenment had arrived!

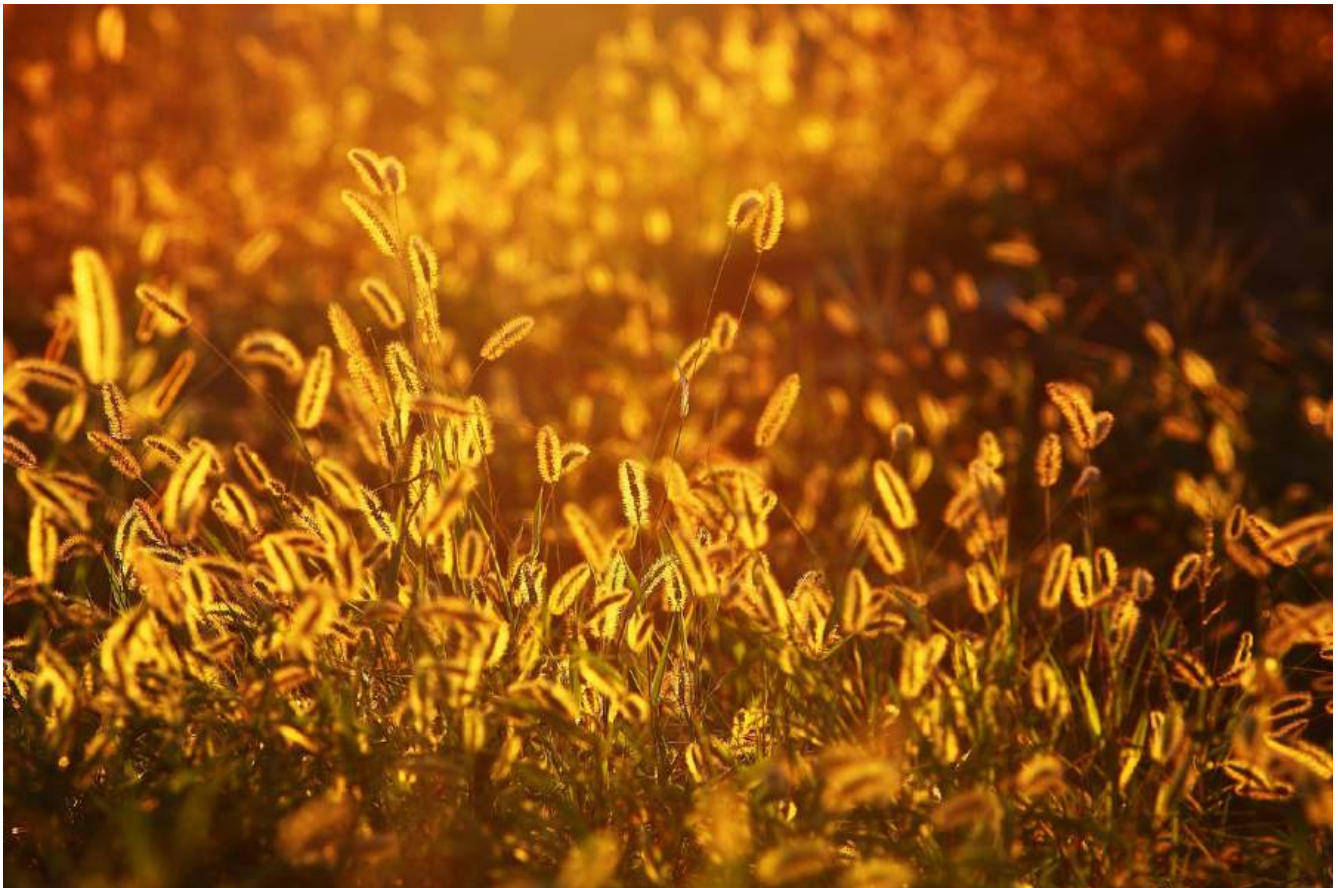
The fortuitous meeting between Margaret Fell (1614-1702) and George Fox happened in 1652. His message of the "Inner Light" convinced Margaret and her household to embrace Quakerism. Margaret's aristocratic connections, diplomacy, wealth, organizational skills and writings were crucial for the movement's growth, earning her the title, "Mother of Quakerism." With Judge Thomas Fell's support, Swarthmoor Hall became the mainstay hostel for early Friends. 'The Valiant Sixty' had a place to call home. George Fox and Margaret Fell were spiritual partners, who, after Judge Fell's death, became life-partners and equally saved the nascent religious movement from persecution and threatened extinction.

Swarthmoor Hall's hospitality, and Charles II's "gift" of Pennsylvania to William Penn (1681), assured Quakerism's survival. Fox's genius for organization is revealed by initiating egalitarian practice in business meetings, which arose from the distinctive Quaker form of contemplative worship. Meetings for Worship for Business identified those who needed practical assistance; no job, no income, no basic legal rights, no life. Meetings for Sufferings were essential to provision food, clothing, social contact, legal aid, and hope. Fox wrote letters and pamphlets, preached to jailers, and organized the growing Society of Friends, as did Margaret Fell, who was a talented and articulate writer, in her own right. The Quaker sect spread worldwide. Fox left to posterity a heritage: wait for the Light and act with religious conviction.

The Quaker Legacy of the Testimonies of Integrity, Peace, Equality, Simplicity, Community, Environment, and Stewardship are guiding principles for future generation of Friends to discover and apply. Fresh insights into old ideas are realized. Friends are encouraged to engage in philosophical, biblical, and other sacred texts as resources for spiritual Truth, to seek inspiration from the ‘Inner Light’, to engage in corporate worship ‘in spirit and in truth’ (*“this I knew experimentally”*), and to follow the Advice:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.

The Quaker belief in the “Inner Light” and the individual and corporate search for Truth is seminal for social justice advocacy. The Quaker Legacy is revolutionary.



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, Siân 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.