

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

September 2025



Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us.

Advices and Queries #8

Upcoming Events and Announcements

On Sunday, September 14, there will be a First Day School Family picnic after meeting.

On Sunday, September 28, the First Day School will visit Ian's farm.

The next meeting of the Reading Group will be on Sunday, September 28 beginning at 7:30 p.m. in our Zoom space. The group will be choosing a new book by an indigenous author. 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, October 5 at 12:30 p.m. You can also join us online on our regular Meeting Zoom link.

Our cover photo this month was taken by Sheldon Clark on August 29 at Cooper Road and #97 Cambridge.



New in the Library

by Jane MacKayWright

Walk Humbly, Serve Boldly: Modern Quakers as Everyday Prophets

by Margery Post Abbott

Everyday prophets are “people who are faithful to the path of truth and love and whose lives project hope and a passion for justice. This path is at the core of Quaker worship and spiritual discipline.”

The Art of Peace by Elizabeth Doxtater

The Great Law of Peace is the story of The Peacemaker and the formation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Six Nations artist Doxtater documents her personal journey to understanding.

Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation

by Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield

An accessible guide to developing the openness and compassion that is at the heart of insight meditation.

Youth fiction

The Autumn's Brightness by Daisy Newman

Don't Think Twice by Alison Lohans

Picturing Alyssa by Alison Lohans

A Girl's Paradise Lost by Naval Halawa

Picture books

On the Trapline by David Robertson and Julie Flett

Be a Good Ancestor by Gabrielle Prince and Leona Prince

What is a Refugee by Elise Gravel

Rumi: Poet of Joy and Love by Rashin Kheiriyeh

Others Exploring Silence

by Richard Bott

"How will we know," she asked, "when we should speak?"

The seven of us, all United Church folks, were far more used to a scripted liturgy when it came to our gatherings. But, this season of Lent, we had decided to sit together each week in the style of our Quaker friends' meeting for worship.

"I don't really know how it is for anybody else, but for me, I find that something burbles to the surface of my mind and makes me notice it. After I do, I let it go. If it comes back to me, I notice it again, and then push it away. I keep doing that until it is clear that the idea itself wants to be shared with the group. Sometimes it feels like the thought is going to shake itself loose from me. Other times it is less dramatic, but there's a sense that this thought is for the group, not just for me."

The room was quiet that night. It wouldn't be until our third meeting that one of those gathered rose to share. Afterwards, in our fellowship time, another participant told us that they thought that, after the first person spoke, floodgates would burst open and all of our thoughts would come pouring out, but had found that all they wanted to do was sit with what had been shared.

Although it was only for eight weeks, sitting in meeting for worship was a profound experience for that group. Each of us has found that we are far more reflective before we speak in the scripture explorations, book groups, and business meetings in our community of faith. One person shared, "I look at a thought a few times, asking myself if sharing it will be helpful for the community." Some in the group searched out Monthly Meeting, finding themselves wanting to understand and experience more of the Society of Friends' faith and life experience.

In a world where non-stop action is the norm and where voice is often ego-driven (and in a community of faith where both of those things are also true) the gift of the practice of meeting for worship is powerful and transformative.

Richard Bott is a former moderator of the United Church of Canada, and current lead minister of Grace United Church, Burlington. He is a professional author, runs a private mediation practice, and has been an occasional attendee at monthly meetings across the country, including ours.



Irrelevance

by Sheldon Clark

“Quakers have little theology, but they take IT seriously,” is an old joke. The theological source for IT is the belief that “God is love.” Friends believe that it is how you express IT, that reveals holiness. IT is love found in continuing revelation. The expectation is to practice IT socially, economically, politically, and upon the firm foundation of the Golden Rule. Liberal Quakerism emphasizes spiritually-led actions rather than strict doctrines.

‘Meeting’ is a collective noun meaning both a place and a group of people. The Meeting consists of members and regular attenders. Meeting for liberal Friends means a gathering to worship the spirit of Divine Love, the Sacred, the Seed, the Inner Light, the Spirit of Christ. Meetings for Worship are held in expectant silence. Those present worship as seekers. Some worshippers may even hold non-theistic or atheist beliefs. Contemplative worship is the historical way in which participants with diverse views find a unifying sense of being. Biblically speaking, *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal.”*

Occasionally, oral ministry may derive from worldly experiences that express insight into the eternal. Oral ministry is meant to be inspirational, informative, and contribute an enlightened dimension about spiritual living. Paradoxically, silent ministry speaks eloquently for itself and is valued.

“I believe that being (self-awareness, personal integrity, spirituality) is the source which sustains (effective) ministry.” - Dwight L. Grubs, *Spiritual Formation for Leaders* (1994)

“The Christian leader is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. That is the way Jesus came to reveal God’s love... Jesus’ first temptation was to be relevant: to turn stones into bread (to meet people’s needs through dramatic accomplishments)... The leader of the future will be the one who

dares to claim his irrelevance in the contemporary world as a divine vocation that allows him or her to enter into a deep solidarity with the anguish underlying all of success and to bring the light of Jesus there.”

- Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (1989)

“Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.” - George Fox’s instruction to Friends (1657)

“True silence... is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.” - William Penn (1699)

“Prayer is not an occasional nod/ Given in passing to God. / It’s more like marriage – a closeness of living,/ A constant receiving and giving.” - Louie Horne.

“[Ministry is] what the inner light gently pushes you toward or suddenly dumps in your lap. It is rooted in the eternity, divinity, and selflessness of the Inner Light; not in the worldly, egoistic functions of the conscious mind.” - Marianne McMullen

Each offering subtly asks, “Stop. Look. Listen,” and welcomes inspiration that originates from scriptural sources and lived experience.

21st century Liberal Friends are present to each other as companions in listening to the ‘still small voice’ that guides, challenges, and evokes divine love in public worship and in private consoling. Merely being quietly close by another, their darkest moments can be illuminated. We accomplish this by being present, listening, and showing compassion. The individual who ministers is irrelevant because it is understood that it is not the “I” that is relevant, but IT.

Book Review: *The Dazzle of Day* by Molly Gloss

by Glenna Janzen

Quakers in space?? Quakers on another planet?? Read *The Dazzle of Day* by the brilliant writer, Molly Gloss, to find out more. (Although there is actually another book in the HMM library about Quakers in space: *Still Forms on Foxfell*. Read them both!)

The Dazzle of Day was a book that when I finished it, I almost turned back to page 1 and started again – yes, it's that good! Not only a crackin' good and complex story, but also a very interesting view of a group of people who use Friends' ways for all their decision-making – whether for farm or neighbourhood or technical decision-making. I wish I'd read it before or while I was Clerk. This comment makes it sound as if it might be dry or a "how to" book; it isn't. Rather, I think the book allows us to see ourselves as if from space – clearly and with no sentimentality.

The book begins with one woman's story, a woman trying to decide if she will join the Friends going on the spaceship. The next chapters are 175 years in the future after generations have lived on the spaceship and travelled further and further seeking a hospitable planet. Each chapter is narrated by a different character which gives the stories a richness and variety. The book includes humour, some if it a tad raunchy, suspense, drama, and adventure – all in all pretty much everything one wants in a good book.

You can find this book in our library, call number F GLO.



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.