

# Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

## June 2023



***Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs? Bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society's conventions or its laws. Try to discern new growing points in social and economic life. Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?***

*Advices and Queries #33*

# Upcoming Events and Announcements

The next Quaker Education Session will be on Sunday, June 18, beginning at noon. Participants are welcome to bring a lunch.

Ministry and Counsel are delighted to announce that Beverly and Robbie Shepard have generously offered to host a day retreat at their home on Saturday, June 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme will be “Reflections Inspired by Surviving the Pandemic”. The morning session will be a contemplation on loss and learnings from the pandemic. The afternoon session will focus on the present and wishes and visions for the future. There will be opportunities to walk the labyrinth, the woodlands and a local trail. Soup will be provided, and participants are encouraged to bring other lunch items. More details will be available in an email at a future date.

The next meeting of the Reading group will be on Sunday, June 25 from 3 to 4 p.m. in our Zoom space. We will be discussing “The Journal of George Fox”, from pages 106 to 125, from *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings*. Please contact Shirla (shirla766@gmail.com) to be added to the participant list.

The June-July 2023 issue of *Friends Journal* is in the mail and live now online. The theme is leadership, a topic both important to Friends and fraught in our Religious Society. Hamilton Monthly Meeting is a subscriber to this publication, and print copies will be placed in the library when they arrive. To download the full issue PDF, click here: <https://www.friendsjournal>. To read all this issue's features on the website, including online-only stories, visit: <https://www.friendsjournal>.

Here's an urgent request from your Friendly Library Committee: A collection of books and papers that make up a First Day School curriculum on Peace has gone missing from the Meetinghouse. If you have borrowed this, please return it, or if you know where it might be, please contact Jane MacKay Wright, Glenna Janzen, Shirla Schellenberg or Carol Leigh Wehking.

CYM's Education and Outreach Committee is pleased to announce the extension of the deadline to June 26th for small grants for the 2023 Gathering. Small

grants are being offered to support in-person and online attendance at the Annual Gathering (CYM In-Session). For those who only want to attend online, grants can cover up to 75% of the registration cost! To find out more information and apply for Education and Outreach grants and other CYM grants, click here: <https://quaker.ca/resources/>

PSAC has adjourned for the summer months. PSAC meets next on September 25; watch for the announcement in the September newsletter.

The next Meeting for Worship for Business will be held on our regular Zoom link on Sunday, September 10 at 1:30 p.m.



# Thoughts on Quaker Worship

by Sheldon Clark

This article is based around discussion topics issued by the Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel.

- How to stay grounded in worship together and follow the Quaker process in Zoom or hybrid meetings.
- How to ensure that new and less experienced Friends learn Quaker practice when a Meeting has few experienced Friends.

## Grounded in Worship

Challenge: to define what is meant by Quaker Worship.

Opportunity: to enjoy Common Understanding:

Definition: *Worship is the intentional gathering of Quakers as a believing community to focus in the 'Living Silence' on the experience of God (aka, the Holy Spirit, the Inner Light, the Seed, the Supreme Being, the Divine) in life.*

Outline:

- I. Begin by gathering into 'The Living Silence'
- II. Attentiveness to the workings of God in one's own life and in the lives of others
- III. Compelled to Witness (Share Oral Ministry) one's insight
- IV. Continuing to "Listen" to God in the 'Living Silence'
- V. Sensing the end to this occasion of Worship

## Customs and Conventions

The Clerk Opens the Meeting for Worship by announcement, and possibly with an explanation.

The Clerk Closes the Meeting for Worship with an announcement, such as, "Let us rise and greet one another."

Experienced Friends demonstrate sitting in contemplative silence.

### Conventions

- A. Friends focus on, and present ministry about, "spiritual openings" in worship.
- B. Minister only once.
- C. Present oral ministry briefly and loudly enough to be heard.
- D. Friends want to share the Living Silence with others in and through worship. (Be considerate, thoughtful, and compassionate.)
- E. Friends leave worldly distractions outside as they enter into and participate in worship. (*"Come apart and rest awhile."* - Mark 6:31)

N. B.: This Outline is purposely brief and is meant to encourage active engagement.



# New Haiku

*by Sheldon Clark*

## I

Snowflake light she tip-toed  
Melding revelations  
Showering blossoms

## II

Fragrance placement still  
Bees whizz rose to rose to rose  
Courting brown noddies bow

## V

Since love vanished  
Lamenting dog mourns alone  
Traffic hurries past

(Haiku V was based on a real event. Katherine, Joan's youngest daughter, lives alone in an old farmhouse with her German Shepherd dog. She had a stroke and luckily was discovered by a friend before she died. She was rushed to emergency. Her house was locked as was the gate to the property. Her dog remained near the house for several months and was fed and cared for by her friend. Another friend, meanwhile, had power of attorney and took care of any legal matters. Katherine survived, recovered, and returned to live independently in the farmhouse. She found her faithful GSD dog waiting for her. Amazing! It was the GSD's love (Katherine) that had vanished. GSD mourned alone. Other than the friend, who daily checked the property, mowed the grass, and fed the dog, no one really bothered. This was the unconcerned traffic that simply hurried past the locked gate.)

# **Book Review: *Where Words Come From* by Douglas V. Steere**

*by Don Woodside*

I got interested in this little book because of my interest in where vocal ministry comes from, when it is not just our memories, plans, intentions and wishes, but something deeper, something mystical or spiritual in origin, the place where deep meditative insights also arise. This was Steere's Swarthmore Lecture in England in 1955.

## **Speaker and Listener**

Steere begins with an analysis of the speaker and the listener, and in each there is an outer speaker or listener and an inner one. He talks of the spectator listener in the speaker and its impact on the speaker's openness and honesty, and the listener in the (objective) listener and its impact. He tells us stories where it is clear that there has been a lack of imagination, or a clogging of the works, or holding back, which impeded openness; and others where we open to each other unexpectedly with profound sharing as the result. Sometimes it is necessary for the listener to show s/he had had related experiences, but mostly s/he must care, and be unafraid of being irradiated by the speaker's needs.

## **God in the mix**

Steere goes on to explain that the Listener he is talking about is the Living God. He quotes Kierkegaard, and psalm 139, both of which are reassurances that we are being listened to by the Divine (a word he does not use). We need reassurance that we are accepted as an original, loved and accepted as Jesus loved and accepted the tax collector and the prostitute. The Living Listener takes people to God and leaves them there. Steere has confidence in the thinness of the membrane between speaker, listener, and God. This Listener he speaks of repeatedly is more of a function, an action, than a being. Nowhere does he drift into a theological discussion.

## Corporate Worship

Corporate worship brings people to speak their needs and be brought to listen. He asks: does vocal ministry bring the worshipper into corporate attentive awareness of the Living Listener? Does it keep them there until they have spoken out their deepest concern and been brought themselves to listen? Does it bring the listener to listen with their whole being to God's care for the world? He goes on to draw a parallel with the standard Christian order of worship which includes praise, penitence, forgiveness, petition, edification, benediction. Quakers wrap them all in one cloth, a responsibility laid on the individual Quaker. Yet it is not as individuals but as a community in which are intimately aware of and intimately gathered around the living Listener who knows and cares for all. And then only when what was consciously begun has been crowded out of consciousness by the union to which it leads, does the focussing and refocussing of attention which the individual Quaker undertakes make worship fruitful. This is a challenging practice and newcomers need guidance about how to undertake the voluntary surrender of attention. Our voluntary worship is important but it is the involuntary attention which sweeps us up into union with the Listener.

## A Crucible

Steere says that silent worship can become a crucible for refining human slag. It is 'only when words come up fresh and breathless moist and glistening from the sea of existence that they carry power.' The common stem of vocal ministry from Fox to the present is a listening ministry. Ministry arises up out of the silence of those gathered in worship of the living God who has listened them into a condition of openness.

Douglas V Steere  
Swarthmore Lecture 1955  
"Where words come from"  
Also published in the USA by  
Harper and Rowe as "On Listening to Another"  
ISBN 0 85245 067 2

# 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. 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](mailto: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.*