

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

April 2020



Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

(Advices and Queries, #1)

Some Thoughts from Your Clerk

So much has changed since the last newsletter went out. I hope this finds you adjusting to all the changes that Covid-19 keeps bringing. We are all being ask to stay home and only go out when absolutely necessary and/or on essential business. This means that some of us are working harder than ever, some of us are finding the days long, and for some this has brought distressing challenges. Lots of new learning is happening as we adjust to changing conditions.

At Sunday's business meeting we discussed how to better support each other. A small group consisting of Chris Hitchcock, Wilf Ruland, and Betty Preston has formed to work on this, and included elsewhere in this newsletter is information from this newly forming group. If you are able to assist others or if you are needing assistance, then this group would like to hear from you!

Our on-line Meetings for Worship have been going well considering that this is very new to most of us. Friends who have been able to join in have expressed gratitude in being able to see and hear one another even if we can't be together - with familiar faces providing some reassurance and continuity. While many of us are meeting on-line for Meeting for Worship, others are worshipping from their homes without the use of technology, as we did the first Sunday after the Meeting House was closed. Some have now tried both options - some preferring to Worship without the distraction of technology, and others preferring the visual and verbal connection that technology offers.

We encourage you to join us in a way that you are comfortable with. If you have not tried to access Meeting for Worship on-line and you are interested, then you are encouraged to try it out - the information is emailed out each week. If you have tried the

on-line or phone options but were unsuccessful or would like to try but don't know where to start, then please let me know by email and I will help you or connect you up with someone who can help.

As the world works together to minimize the spread of the virus, let us too keep working together from a distance to stay safe, support one another, and hold this world and everyone in it in the Light.

In friendship, your clerk.

Shirla Schellenberg

P.S. If you have asked to only receive monthly mailings of the Newsletter via email, but now would like to hear from us more often to be able to access the on-line information about our weekly Meetings for Worship, then please email me at: shirla766@gmail.com



Upcoming Events at Hamilton Meeting

Both Meeting for Worship and First Day School will be held virtually for the foreseeable future. Details will be sent out each week, as applicable.

May 2 (Saturday) had been the scheduled date for the Yonge Street Half Yearly Meeting. This meeting has been postponed until the fall, to be provisionally held on Saturday, October 3, at our Meeting House. Details will be worked out in the coming months.

May 3 will be our next Meeting for Worship for Business in our Zoom Meeting space. Email will be sent inviting members and attenders to this meeting.

June 5-7 had been scheduled as the Camp NeeKauNis Spring Gathering of Hamilton Quaker members and attenders. Due to the physical distancing restrictions and prohibitions on recreational gatherings, this event has been postponed indefinitely. We will revisit the possibility of a gathering at Camp NeeKauNis once such gatherings are again permitted by the province.



Cambridge Worship Group

Dear CWG, We hope your worship at home was blessed on Friday 27 March. It's good to remind ourselves that like the Covid-19 virus, the Spirit knows no boundaries too! In fact worshipping at home is no barrier to The Light at all! Some of us are journaling the ministries/insights that occur to us during the hour of worship. We can share when we reconvene.

Our next CWG meeting in Spirit, will be April 24 @ 2 pm, venue YOUR HOME. All welcome! May you find blessing during this extraordinary time!

Milton Bequest Advisory Group

We have some very good news, in that our dear departed Friend (John Milton) left a very substantial bequest to our Meeting. We just received the cheque from the lawyer for John's estate last week. At the last business meeting a small group, which currently consists of Dick Preston and Wilf Ruland, was formed and encouraged to recruit several more members, which is the point of this message.

Our small group is tasked with identifying priorities and developing recommendations for our Meeting regarding how best to allocate and/or spend the funds which we've received.

If you would like to assist us with this important task, then please send an e-mail to Dick or Wilf. Both newer and more experienced members of our Meeting with the time and interest are invited to step forward for consideration. We are seeking up to 3 more members. If you would like more information and/or are willing to put your name forward then please contact either of us as follows:

prestonr@mcmaster.ca deerspring1@gmail.com



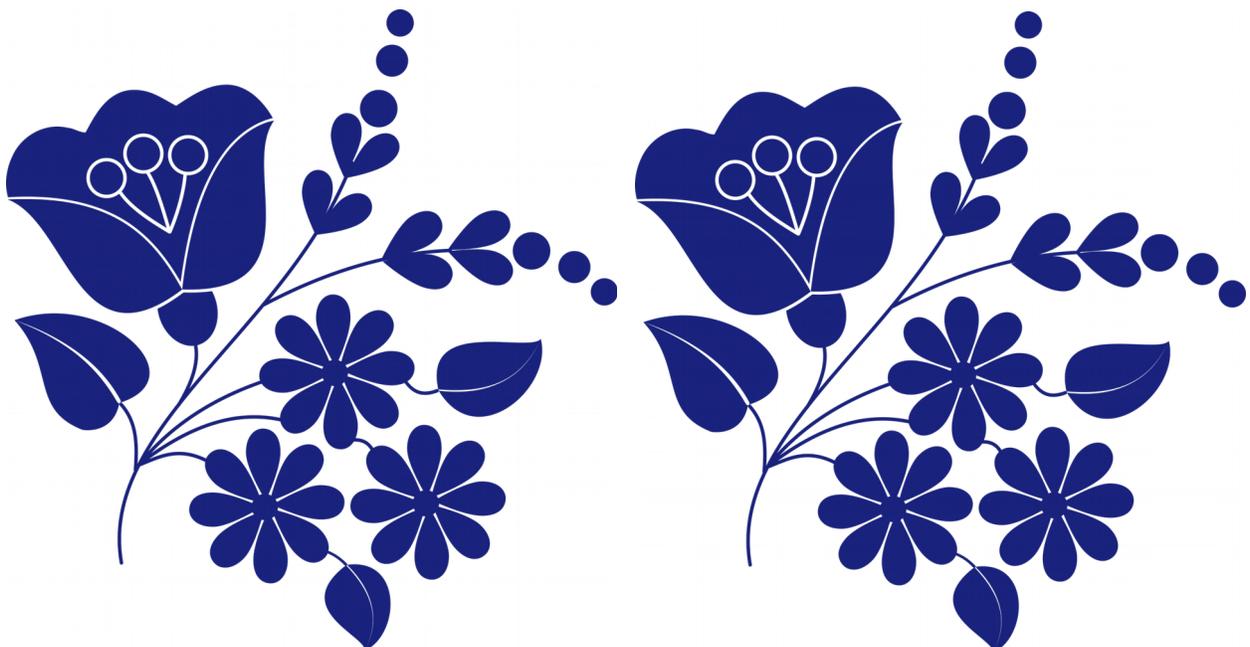
A Note from the Treasurer

I hope that you are all doing okay in these challenging times. I am writing today to make a brief announcement about donations to our Quaker Meeting in 2020.

In normal times our Meeting is funded entirely from members' donations, and so in my Treasurer's Reports I regularly encourage you to make donations -- as they are what allow us to run our programs, maintain the Meeting House, and support other worthy Quaker and community organizations.

But these are not normal times, and it is clear that the Covid-19 virus is having often severe impacts on peoples' finances. At our recent business meeting, it was decided that for the rest of the 2020 fiscal year there is no expectation that anyone should make donations to our Hamilton Quaker Meeting. We are in a strong financial position, and many of us will personally have greater need for the funds which would normally be donated - or we may know of people in our families, friends and communities who are facing dire needs and could use a financial boost.

So what I'm saying is that for this fiscal year (which ends in December 2020) you should feel free to use funds which you might have otherwise donated to our Meeting to meet other, greater needs which you may be aware of. Of course if you are doing well enough financially to support both our Meeting as well as others who may be in need, then we will be grateful for any donation which you may wish to make.



From Peggy Butler

I'm writing to let you know that Tony died on Saturday, March 28 three days after he showed symptoms of pneumonia. I had been kept from visiting him at his long-term care facility, so I was grateful that they called me to his bedside when they realized that he was dying. It was a heart-breaking experience, but I hope that he realized that I was there with him.

Tony will be cremated, but the service at the Meeting House will not be held until the Covid 19 pandemic is over, perhaps in the summer.

Catherine, Tim and I appreciated how warmly you and the other Friends received us when we visited you three weeks ago. I didn't think then that I'd be writing a letter like this to you so soon. We'll be in touch later in the year so we can arrange for a service for Tony.

Warmest regards,
Peggy Butler.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thespec/obituary.aspx?n=anthony-butler&pid=195869783>

<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2020/04/06/renowned-hamilton-architect-anthony-butler-a-fierce-advocate-for-conservancy-dies-at-88.html>

Mona Callin

(Submitted by Reuven Kitai)

A Memorial Meeting cannot be held now, so it may not be out of place to express what might be said there in our News Letter: I cannot recall when I met Mona, our family having first attended Meeting in 1966.

Nor can I recall her activity in Sunday Meeting. She always seemed to be proper, rather somber and unbending; not frivolous, so I never heard her laughing at whatever rubbish would come to my mind.

My significant contact with her arose unexpectedly many years ago. During coffeetime after Meeting I happened to be standing at the large notice board in the foyer. A cutout from the Hamilton Spectator had been pinned at its right consisting of eight small photos of outstanding high school students. (Obviously at least one of them was a child of parents attending Meeting.) Mona happened to come up immediately alongside of me to pin up a new notice. I said to her, "Mona, I do not see your face among these brilliant young achievers". Without deviating from her pinning up she replied, "Yes, and I don't see your face there either".

When Mona moved to live in Amica she asked me to help with hanging pictures on the passage walls. I was pleased to have been asked. Much later, when she was attending Meeting confined to her wheelchair for many months, I would bring her a plate with two or three biscuits with her tea, and I would stipulate the sequence with which she was to eat them. This always brought a smile to her face, confirming that this meant even more than her understanding.



A Reminder to Friends

In these difficult days, even when we believe we are safe for ourselves and for others, we are reminded of our own mortality. Your Meeting of Ministry and Counsel has given careful thought to the idea that we can leave for our loved ones an expression of our wishes and preferences in the event of our serious illness or death. Friends can prepare an official Living Will, or Power of Attorney for Personal Care, to inform those close to them what sorts of treatment they would wish or not wish if they were very ill, and who would be empowered to make decisions about them.

A properly-phrased Power of Attorney is legally binding. Such a document could be accompanied by other documents, framed by the Friend, describing such things as preferences regarding burial or cremation, what could be mentioned in a Memorial Minute, those who might not be known to the heirs but who should be notified of the Friend's death, etc. Being prepared for last days in this way doesn't mean one expects to die soon! It means only that the Friend recognizes that her or his loved ones will be experiencing great distress and grief and would probably appreciate some guidance from the one who has died, whenever that might happen.

Documents such as a Living Will and other instructions about end-of-life matters can be deposited with Hamilton Monthly Meeting, as well as given to those family members (or close friends) who will be left behind. They would be kept in a special file and made available to those who need them when a Friend dies. M&C suggests that Friends consider preparing such documents. Helpful information, including templates for Living Wills, is readily available on the internet. Two such sites are www.lawdepot.ca and www.legalline.ca.





Canadian Friends Service Committee

Quakers working for justice and peace

CFSC hopes to provide an opportunity for Friends across the country to stay connected and to worshipfully reflect on service and community during these difficult times.

A 30 minute Meeting for Worship will be held each Wednesday for the foreseeable future at: 7:30 am Pacific Time, 8:30 am Mountain Time, 9:30 am Central Time, 10:30 am Eastern Time, 11:30 am Atlantic Time.

The 30 minutes of worship will be followed by 30 minutes of sharing.

To join, use this link (note that Zoom will ask you to download it onto your device if you do not already have it when you click this link, it will provide you with easy steps to follow in order to do this): <https://zoom.us/j/981698440>

We know that this form of worship and sharing is new. We ask that you take a minute to go over these points of 'Zoom etiquette' before joining:

- If you arrive late, please mute yourself and participate as a silent observer until the facilitator finishes up whatever is happening and has a chance to welcome you.
- If you have to leave early, you will see that there is a 'chat box' where you can type in to let us know that you are leaving early and not just disappearing on us because of a technical issue.
- When you are not speaking, please mute yourself to prevent the rest of us from being distracted by any background noise in your environment.
- If you have to walk from one place to another or otherwise move around with your smart phone or your computer, please 'stop' your video so that the rest of us don't get sea-sick.

Zoom meetings are fairly easy to get used to, but it is technology and can trigger anxiety for those of us who are technologically challenged. Deep breathing,

patience, and treating this as an intercultural learning opportunity are helpful antidotes to anxiety triggered by trying to figure out this new technology.

If all else fails, try turning off your computer, restarting, and signing in again. You can also learn more about joining Zoom meetings here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en->

We look forward to sharing in worship with you!

Lana Robinson & Vince Zelazny

Clerks, Canadian Friends Service Committee



A Call for Compassion and Community

A Statement from The Canadian Council of Churches on COVID-19

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak (the new coronavirus) to be a **global pandemic**. In this situation as in others, The Canadian Council of Churches seeks to respond to Christ's call for both **compassion** and **community**.

We appeal to our member churches and other faith communities across Canada to respond to COVID-19 with an abundance of love and precaution, and to **follow best practices** as recommended by both [federal](#) and provincial medical authorities.

Compassion

The best preventative plans and precautions are motivated not by fear or hostility but by **love toward others in our community**, particularly vulnerable groups like the at-risk elderly and immune-compromised.

We urge our member churches to reflect a compassionate, peace-seeking response to COVID-19 by:

- **Recognizing** through prayer the human dimension of grief and suffering COVID-19 has brought to communities both near and far;
- **Being mindful** of the needs of shut-ins and other vulnerable groups who may require additional help accessing medical services and basic amenities;
- **Actively repudiating** the racism and xenophobia that has shaped certain reactions to COVID-19;
- **Using this as an opportunity** to embody hospitality and kindness with creativity and hope;
- **Giving thanks** for the many professionals who continue to risk their own health to treat the sick, be near to the dying, contain the virus, and protect their communities.

Community

With compassion as a central value, we urge our member churches and all Canadians to reinforce a safe community response by following the guidance of Canada's public health agencies.

The Canadian Council of Churches is committed to:

- **Promptly alerting our members** and supporters to any steps we take that may affect them via our [news page](#), social media channels, and (when applicable) email correspondence;
- **Supporting messages** that encourage individuals to **stay home when sick** to avoid exposing others to sicknesses like COVID-19;
- **Encouraging members** of the Council to develop **contingency options** for spring meetings and other gatherings should further travel restrictions take effect.

Given the transmission and mortality rates of COVID-19, **we also urge member churches and their leaders** to help minimize the spread of sickness in their communities by:

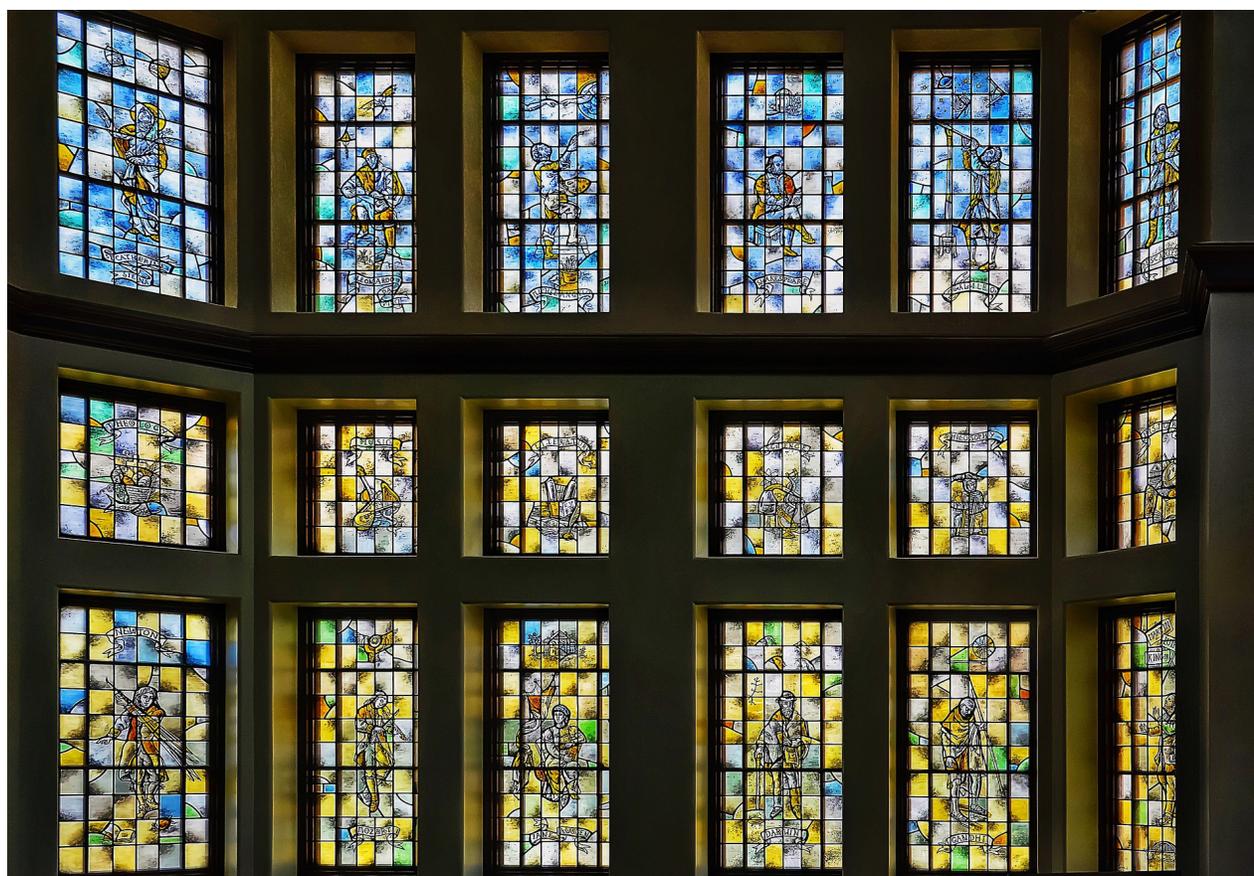
- **Exemplifying good basic hygiene**—washing hands often, coughing or sneezing into sleeves, adopting social distancing measures, and refraining from touching eyes, mouth, and face;

- **Planning ahead** and implementing all applicable [federal](#) and provincial recommendations around crowds, mass gatherings, and event planning;
- **Leveraging any and all resources**, such as live-streamed services and digital worship materials, so members of faith communities may continue to be nourished in their faith even from a distance;
- **Providing accessible, reliable, and up-to-date communications** regarding how COVID-19 might affect church practice in local contexts as well as ensuring community members know where these communications can be found.

Responding to COVID-19 out of both compassion and a concern for community, our prayer as The Canadian Council of Churches is that communities across Canada will respond with love and precaution.

In Christ's love,

Rev. Stephen Kendall
President,
The Canadian Council of Churches



AN IMAGINED LETTER FROM COVID-19 TO HUMANS

a poem by Kirstin Flyntz (submitted by Paul Dekar)

Stop. Just stop.

It is no longer a request. It is a mandate.

We will help you.

We will bring the supersonic, high speed merry-go-round to a halt

We will stop

the planes

the trains

the schools

the malls

the meetings

the frenetic, furied rush of illusions and “obligations” that keep you from hearing our
single and shared beating heart,

the way we breathe together, in unison.

Our obligation is to each other,

As it has always been, even if, even though, you have forgotten.

We will interrupt this broadcast, the endless cacophonous broadcast of divisions and
distractions,

to bring you this long-breaking news:

We are not well.

None of us; all of us are suffering.

Last year, the firestorms that scorched the lungs of the earth
did not give you pause.

Nor the typhoons in Africa, China, Japan.

Nor the fevered climates in Japan and India.

You have not been listening.

It is hard to listen when you are so busy all the time, hustling to uphold the comforts
and

conveniences that scaffold your lives.

But the foundation is giving way,
buckling under the weight of your needs and desires.

We will help you.

We will bring the firestorms to your body

We will bring the fever to your body

We will bring the burning, searing, and flooding to your lungs
that you might hear:

We are not well.

Despite what you might think or feel, we are not the enemy.

We are Messenger. We are Ally. We are a balancing force.

We are asking you:

To stop, to be still, to listen;

To move beyond your individual concerns and consider the concerns of all;

To be with your ignorance, to find your humility, to relinquish your thinking minds
and travel

deep into the mind of the heart;

To look up into the sky, streaked with fewer planes, and see it, to notice its condition:
clear,

smoky, smoggy, rainy? How much do you need it to be healthy so that you may also be
healthy?

To look at a tree, and see it, to notice its condition: how does its health contribute to
the health of

the sky, to the air you need to be healthy?

To visit a river, and see it, to notice its condition: clear, clean, murky, polluted? How
much do

you need it to be healthy so that you may also be healthy? How does its health
contribute to the

health of the tree, who contributes to the health of the sky, so that you may also be
healthy?

Many are afraid now.

Do not demonize your fear, and also, do not let it rule you. Instead, let it speak to you—
in your

stillness,

listen for its wisdom.

What might it be telling you about what is at work, at issue, at risk, beyond the threats of personal inconvenience and illness?

As the health of a tree, a river, the sky tells you about quality of your own health, what might the

quality of your health tell you about the health of the rivers, the trees, the sky, and all of us who

share this planet with you?

Stop.

Notice if you are resisting.

Notice what you are resisting.

Ask why.

Stop. Just stop.

Be still.

Listen.

Ask us what we might teach you about illness and healing, about what might be required so that

all may be well.

We will help you, if you listen.



By Ondrea Levine (submitted by Alice Preston, and used by permission)

May the one I think does not love me, love themselves; may that one I cannot feel in my heart, feel their heart; may that one who hates me, not hate themselves; may that part of me that hates another part of me, have mercy; may mercy roll across the mind like a remembrance of some forgotten love; may all we have forgotten of vanishing light, of fleeting moments of love, gather to heal us.

