

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

January 2021



Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experiences of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?

Advices and Queries #7

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Meeting for Worship will enter silence at 10:30 a.m. The Zoom space will be open at 10:25 to allow people a time to chat and settle in before worship begins.

January 20 there will be a meeting of the Peace and Social Action Committee on Zoom at 7 p.m. If you would like to be added to the participants' e-list, please contact Paul Dekar (pdekar@cogeco.ca).

January 21 there will be an informal Zoom session at 2 p.m. to discuss the events surrounding the inauguration of the American President. Let Shirla know if you would like to participate (shirla766@gmail.com).

The Cambridge Worship Group (CWG) will be meeting separately in our own homes at 2 pm on Friday, 22 January. At 3 pm we will join together via Zoom for After Word and fellowship. If you would like to participate please let Christina know (cmeedwards64@gmail.com) so that we can send you the Zoom link. In the meantime CWG sends you joyful greetings for good health and good times as we step into the New Year!

January 23 is a Zoom session of Canadian Yearly Meeting, beginning at 1:30. Items include Reporting and Clearness sessions for CYM Trustees, and for CYM Finance Committee.

January 24 will see a Zoom-based meeting of the Reading Club. Please email Shirla if you would like to join this group. This meeting will focus on the final chapter of Richard Wagamese's book, **Embers**. The meeting will convene at 3 p.m. A Zoom link will be provided to all those who have expressed interest.

January 28 (Thursday) there will be an informal Zoom discussion on the Change and Sustainable Transformation Working Group's (CAST) proposals, and the issues surrounding the future direction of Canada Yearly Meeting, at 1 p.m.

January 31 at 12:30 p.m. there will be a more formal Zoom discussion of these issues in advance of the CYM session on February 6. If you are interested in participating, let Shirla know so she can send you the Zoom login.

February 6 is a Zoom session of Canadian Yearly Meeting, beginning at 1:30. Items include a Reporting and Clearness session for CYM Archives Committee, as well as a number of items related to CAST.

February 7 will be our next Meeting for Worship for Business. The meeting will be held at 12:30 p.m. in our Zoom Meeting space. Email will be sent inviting members and attenders to this meeting.

Peter Cross is interested in compiling a summary of the current activities of those in our Meeting who were, in earlier times, young Friends. He suggests that parents of former young friends send him something telling him where our former young people are now and what they are doing. He encourages submitters to take some liberties and do a little bragging, but also bear in mind potential privacy concerns. If parents aren't prepared to do that, they could delegate it to the kids. Please send the results to him directly at peteracross@hotmail.ca.



A Message from Nominating Committee

What does it mean to serve Meeting? – Nominating Committee just *knows* you've been wondering...

There are different ways to serve Meeting. Some are hands on – things like Coffee and Housekeeping Committee, or Maintenance and Garden Committee, or Archives Committee, or Library Committee. Some relate to global and/or social concerns like Peace and Social Action Committee. Some positions are appropriate for Friends and attenders alike, and some are more appropriately filled by seasoned Friends – things like Archives Committee, the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, or Clerk.

Nominating Committee invites you to consider the various tasks in Hamilton Meeting and in Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting. (The Positions List for 2020/2021 is below) – And for those of you newer to Hamilton Meeting, Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting consists of three Monthly Meetings (Toronto, Yonge Street, and Hamilton) and gathers twice a year for learning, fellowship, and even a little business. During the pandemic Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting is gathering via online video conferencing. Nominating Committee will also be contacted by the Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) Nominating Committee in order to consider Friends in Hamilton Meeting whose names might be appropriate to send on to Canadian Yearly Meeting. Hamilton Monthly Meeting and Canadian Yearly Meeting positions begin after the rise of the CYM's annual gathering in August. Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting positions begin at various times in the year, as positions need to be filled.

Sometimes the Friends who serve on Nominating Committee might discern a gift in you that you hadn't recognised in yourself and ask you to consider taking on a task that is new to you, and which can give you an opportunity to learn new skills and grow as a person.

For more on specific positions for which Nominating Committee will be seeking Friends and attenders to serve, stay tuned for February's newsletter!

Positions List 2020/2021

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|---|------------------------|
| Clerk of the Meeting | Associate Clerk |
| Recording Clerk | Ministry & Counsel |
| Trustees | Treasurer |
| Assistant Treasurer | Auditor |
| First Day School | Nominating Committee |
| Library | Housekeeping |
| Maintenance and Garden | Directory |
| Statistics | Archives |
| Newsletter | CFSC Liaison |
| Representative Meeting | Emergency Relief Group |
| Ontario Multifaith Council Hamilton Chapter | |
| Hamilton Ecumenical Committee for Refugees | |
| Half Yearly Meeting M&C | |
| Half Yearly Meeting Program Committee | |

Other HMM Tasks

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| Bulletin Board | Plants |
| Calendar Keeper | Marriage Registrars |
| Liaison with Cleaner | Pamphlets |
| Website & Facebook Oversight | Keeper of the Keys |





QUAKERS

Canadian Friends Service Committee

CFSC continues to offer free interactive workshops, open to all, that aim to help participants explore practical peacebuilding skills that can be used in interpersonal interactions of all sorts. This is a great opportunity to build community and to challenge your ideas about peace and conflict.

We're happy to offer this series just for your Meeting if you have 10 or more Friends interested in participating, or Friends can sign up as individuals and be placed in a group with other people from across the country.

So far 100% of participants who responded to our anonymous survey said they would recommend these workshops! Find out more at <https://quakerservice.ca/>

Also, every Wednesday we continue to offer a virtual Meeting For Worship hosted by CFSC Clerk, Lana Robinson and Associate Clerk, Vince Zelazny. All are welcome to join us for 30 minutes of silent worship followed by 30 minutes of sharing.

11:30 am Atlantic, 10:30 am Eastern, 8:30 am Central, 7:30 am Pacific

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/>

Meeting ID: 981 698 440

Join on the phone (find your local number to dial, the meeting ID is the same):

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/>

With thanks,

Matthew Legge

Communications Coordinator, CFSC

HMM Youth Remember Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. January 10, 2021

by Paul R. Dekar

By Zoom, with a poster of Dr. King hanging on a wall behind my desk, I opened a discussion with the teen First Day School group by sharing how Dr. King influenced me. I wore a campaign style button with the words, “Everyone makes a difference.”

From 1961-1965, I studied political science at the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Dr. King spoke there, but after my student time. Nonetheless, I was aware of the civil rights movement, lobbied politicians. I joined anti-war protests as early as 1961 when I had to register for a Reserve Officer Training Corps (the programme was abolished). The summer of 1964, I worked at a city park organizing youth recreation activities. I attended a black church through which I helped register voters for the upcoming presidential election.

On July 2, 1964, volunteers gathered to celebrate enactment of a landmark civil rights bill that outlawed discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex or national origin, and banned unequal application of voter registration requirements, racial segregation in schools and public accommodations and employment discrimination. A grizzled movement veteran observed, “We have crossed a river. There’s a mountain ahead.” These words proved prophetic since opposition still exists to the legislation and its successor Voting Rights Bill of 1965.

I had prepared for law school, but instead attended Colgate Rochester Divinity School in upstate New York. On April 4, 1967, Dr. King called on ministers of draft age to give up their exemption from the military draft and to seek conscientious objector status. I did, and proposed alternative service with the United States government. As a result, Nancy and I served three years in Cameroon. After Dr. King’s murder on April 4, 1968 while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, I created a memorial book signed by a leper, a Catholic cardinal and many others.

Shifting to a teaching career, I offered courses and wrote books about Dr. King. I did research at the King Centre in Atlanta, Georgia where I attended the first celebration of the holiday honoring Dr. King. I signed and carry in my wallet a Living the Dream Pledge:

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr's life and work, I pledge to do everything that I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom and peace will grow and flourish. On January 20, 1986, I commit myself to living the dream by loving, not hating, showing understanding, not anger, making peace, not war.

In 1989, with George Horton, then pastor of King Street Baptist Church and later Stewart Memorial Church in Hamilton, I helped organize what became an annual event. The first speaker was Rosa Parks. Her coming was significant not only because in 1955 she sparked the Montgomery bus boycott, but also because women were the backbone of the movement.

In her talk, Parks observed, "King made us believe in ourselves. He dreamed a beloved community, and we are now part of it. We have work to do. King made it possible. We honor his legacy by seeking to live the Christian life as he taught it."

Another notable speaker in the series was the late Billy Kyles, longtime participant in the civil rights movement and founding pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Memphis. In 2008, Kyles spoke at several venues of his experience having witnessed Dr. King's assassination.

In January 1995, I moved to Memphis. At a meeting with the first African American elected mayor, Willi Herenton asked why I had given up a job in Canada to come to Memphis. I recalled a poster at the airport welcoming folk to the city as a logistics hub for companies like FedEx or Nike. I said, "I want to help make Memphis the city where Dr. King's dream is alive."

Trying to live the dream in Memphis, I initiated several efforts that brought together religious leaders, community organizers and the wider public. One effort was removing a statue of Nathan Bedford Forest (founder of the Ku Klux Klan) from a park. Another was winning a living wage for county and city workers. A third endeavour involved defending an African American student

charged with having murdered her husband. She was acquitted and became chaplain at a women's jail.

Over the years, I taught courses in which visitors recalled participation in the movement. Some were sanitation workers whose demands for a living wage had led Dr. King to visit the city twice as part of the Poor People's Campaign. Some students had met Dr. King. One had been a member of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama during Dr. King's tenure as pastor. The father of another served on Memphis City Council when Dr. King died. Another was elected to the city's board of education. One is now president of Memphis Theological Seminary. Some are in the Memphis School of Servant Leadership that encourages individual reflection on personal faith and service to others.

Before the session with the youth, I had emailed a link to a speech by Dr. King on April 26, 1967 at a Cleveland, Ohio school: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMMxhjFYBgM>. After my story, we discussed Dr. King's challenge to students to rise up and say "I am a somebody." Some shared what it feels like to be a "somebody" and why this is sometimes hard. We read two pieces by Dr. King: *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community?* (p. 167):

Some years ago a famous novelist died. Among his papers was found a list of suggested story plots for future stories, the most prominently underscored being this one: "A widely separated family inherits a house in which they have to live together." This is the great new problem of mankind. We have inherited a big house, a great "world house" in which we have to live together - black and white, Easterners and Westerners, Gentiles and Jews, Catholics and Protestants, Moslem and Hindu, a family unduly separated in ideas, culture, and interests who, because we can never again live without each other, must learn, somehow, in this one big world, to live with each other in peace.

To achieve a "world house," Dr. King called for "true compassion," "a revolution of values" and "nonviolent coexistence" not violent co-annihilation, to overcome racism, poverty and war, three great problems that humanity still confronts. Dr. King's vision of a world house remains a goal for all people, all

nations, all religions and all times. Dr. King's nonviolent philosophy remains the key for unlocking a way to realize that vision.

Another excerpt from a sermon Dr. King preached on August 27, 1967 highlighted human interrelatedness as a moral imperative. Explaining that "Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." Dr. King's emphasized inter-dependence, crucial to Black Lives Matter.

Maybe you haven't ever thought about it, but you can't leave home in the morning without being dependent on most of the world. You get up in the morning, and you go to the bathroom and you reach over for a sponge, and that's even given to you by a Pacific Islander. You reach over for a towel, and that's given to you by a Turk. You reach down to pick up your soap, and that's given to you by a Frenchman. Then after dressing, you rush to the kitchen and you decide this morning that you want to drink a little coffee; that's poured in your cup by a South American. Or maybe this morning you prefer tea; that's poured in your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you want cocoa this morning; that's poured in your cup by a West African. Then you reach over to get your toast, and that's given to you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning you are dependent on more than half of the world (*A Knock at Midnight*, pp. 151-152)

The youth offered ways they might respond to Dr. King. They might join Black Lives Matter marches or attend a rally or speech. They might put up BLM signs in their home, or on a car. When they hear a racist comment or racist joke, they might speak up, "Don't say that." Or "You can't talk like that." They might read further or listen to more of Dr. King's sermons and speeches. They can pay attention to the dignity of others in daily interactions. They can affirm the diversity of their backgrounds and highlight the contributions of people from around the world to building what Dr. King called the "beloved community."