

# Hamilton Friends February 2017 Newsletter



## Advices and Queries

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?

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## Coffee List

Feb 12 - (pot luck)  
Feb 19 -  
Feb 26 - Glenna and Carol Leigh



**Sunday February 12:** Lunch Potluck:  
Judy Pocock of Toronto Meeting with a  
talk: Beyond Words: Early Quakers and  
the Bible.

**Saturday February 18, 2 p.m.:**  
Memorial Meeting for John Milton

**Sunday February 19, 2:30 p.m.:**  
Memorial Meeting for Jean Johnson

**Sunday, March 5,** Meeting for Worship  
for Business

**Saturday April 8:** One-day retreat at  
Meeting House led by Paul Dekar on  
ideas of the Divine

The Cambridge Worship Group will be meeting  
ON February 24  
FOR Worship and Refreshment  
AT 64 Wellington Street, Cambridge N1R 3Y7  
ALL WELCOME!  
Contact person: Christina Edwards 519-740-8889  
[cmeedwards@rogers.com](mailto:cmeedwards@rogers.com)

Hi everyone,

Just a quick note to share with you some news and photos of our Syrian family.

We are sponsoring Subhi, Mamdoha, and their daughters Nisreen (with her baby Laila) and ELin - see the photos below! Subhi is stuck in Syria but hoping to join his family when they come to Canada. They have 3 other daughters, one of whom (Noura) lives in Hamilton with her husband (Sami) and their family. Their son Nourallah (in one of the photos) and his family have been sponsored by the Barton Stone church, and we are working together with the church.

Mamdoha, Nisreen, ELin and Laila continue to need our financial support as they wait in Turkey for the Canadian government to process their refugee application. They are not allowed to work, and don't have access to Turkey's national healthcare system. ELin was sick recently and had to go to a private clinic. The costs of that visit and the prescribed course of antibiotics for an infection she was suffering from ate up much of the monthly transfer I had sent them.

So I plan to send the family funds again on the 22nd, and would very much appreciate any assistance any of you can provide with that funding. Thanks very much to all those who have already contributed! If anyone wishes to support this initiative I will need a cheque or e-transfer made out to me personally (but remember there will be no tax receipts!). I will give a written receipt for amounts received, and the family in Turkey is keeping records of funds received at their end so that there is an accounting of what is being collected and sent.

In the meantime, I have shared with the family the importance of their learning as much English as they can while they are waiting in Turkey. Subhi is sending them various reading materials and videos, and is stressing to them that this is something they can do for themselves while they wait. More than anything else, the speed at which they get their English up to a fluent level will determine how they fare in Canada in the long term.

I am very much hoping that we can reassemble our HMM sponsorship volunteers sometime soon - Don and/or Betty should be in touch with you about that separately. We have lots to do to prepare for their arrival!

All the best,

Wilf

P.S. I'll let Subhi have the last word, with this excerpt from a recent e-mail:  
*" Thank you for transferring \$700 to my family in Istanbul again. My wife has picked it up today, as usual, and sent me a photo of the receipt she got from the bank. I am attaching it to this email. However, we hope you will be able to continue supporting them in Turkey until their travel to Canada , which we pray for : the sooner, the better. They won't be able to stay in Turkey without your financial support.*

*I wish the application process didn't take so long. Unfortunately, it is a normal governmental issue dealing with thousands of refugees applications. Please try to find a way in order to keep supporting my family , if possible , until their dilemma is over. Indeed, it is an extra heavy burden that you are friendly and kindly tolerating it.*

*Nevertheless, we will remain optimistic no matter how difficult and hard our life is. We hope 2017 will bring happiness to everyone.*

*My family and I thank you and your churches so much for every thing you have been doing for us.*

*Do keep in touch. Best regards. Subhi"*





Nourallah, Mamdoha & Nisreen

4 years ago

Elin Hussein



## **Bowing to our Adversaries**

### **Going Forth**

#### **Touching the Earth for Our Adversaries**

As we go forth in the Great Turning, there are systems and institutions that we will and must challenge. The men and women who serve these structures may appear as our opponents, but they are likely in bondage to our true opponents: organized forms of greed, hatred, and delusion.

Here is a practice that helps to free us from fear and ill will toward such people.

Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh encourages his students to express their respect, gratitude, and goodwill by the act of bowing to their elders and teachers, the Buddha Dharma and the spiritual community, their original faith traditions, their ancestors, their home place on the planet. Because some Westerners are uncomfortable with notion of bowing, he calls it Touching the Earth. This particular practice for honouring our adversaries was composed by an ordained senior member of his Order of Interbeing, Caitriona Reed.

#### **Method**

Everyone stands with enough room in front of them to kneel and touch the ground with hands and forehead. Or if they prefer, people can simply bow from the waist. If there is an altar or emblem, like an Earth flag, they can be facing it. The guide reads the text aloud, pausing after each paragraph, at which point everyone (guide included) touches the Earth.

Let each bow be marked by a bell or gong. Maintain a slow, unhurried pace throughout.

We begin by bowing to the Earth, in gratitude for life itself. Then we bow to the ancestors and teachers we revere, and, after that, to all our companions in the Great Turning. Now the bows to our adversaries begin.

You, who destroy the natural world for profit, you show me how much I respect and honour our planet home and fellow beings. So I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

You bring forth in me the love I feel for this life-bearing land; its soil, air and waters, and for the community that rises in its defense. Because of the strength with which I resist your actions, I learn how strong my love really is. I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

Because the pain I feel when I witness the pain of the world is no less than your pain you, who perpetuate destruction and cut yourselves off from the web of life ... I bow to you in compassion and touch the Earth.

Because the pain of greed, alienation and fear is no less than the pain of sorrow for what is lost, I bow to you in compassion and touch the Earth.

For the power of my anger, arising from love for the beauty and integrity of all life-forms, and for the bright energy of my passion for justice, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

Because we all want to be happy, to feel intact and part of a single whole; for that shared longing, I bow to you in compassion and touch the Earth.

Because your actions challenge me to see the limits to my own understanding, they help me detach from my view as the only correct one. I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

You who teach me that the mind is a miracle, capable of manifesting as love, as greed, as fear, as clarity or delusion; you who show me what I myself am capable of when I am governed by fear and greed ...Oh great awesome teachers, I bow to you in gratitude and touch the Earth.

With the understanding of our mutual belonging in the web of life, and with love in my heart, I bow to you and touch the Earth.

from Joanna Macy , "The Work That Reconnects"

-Submitted by Darlene James

## Winter Light

Of course it is low,  
sweeping round the southern rim  
of my northern home,  
and it is long,  
stretching from the distant sun  
as earth inclines away,  
and these are things we know  
and understand, or claim to,  
as natural consequence of  
our planet's revolution,  
but  
this reasoning cannot explain  
how winter light  
gleams with such delicacy  
through skeletal woods,  
illumines sky and snow  
with silken wisdom,  
spreads with a grace that  
transforms grey to pearl,  
reveals  
the heavens' soul.

-Bev Shepard