



*White Poppy Wreath*

*Photo: Robert Parkes*

# NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA QUAKER MEETING

December 2024

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## Meetings for Worship Editorial

### CLACTON

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Contact: [liz.prockter@gmail.com](mailto:liz.prockter@gmail.com)

Harwich Worshipping Group

Contact:

[hazel.jones1@btinternet.com](mailto:hazel.jones1@btinternet.com)

### COLCHESTER

Contact:

[pwp.campion@gmail.com](mailto:pwp.campion@gmail.com)

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Meeting for reflection:

Wednesday 12.noon

[jg.greenwood@btinternet.com](mailto:jg.greenwood@btinternet.com)

### EARLS COLNE

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Clerk: Jenny Kay

[earlscolne@essexsuffolkquakers.org](mailto:earlscolne@essexsuffolkquakers.org)

### SUDBURY

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10.30 am

Contact : Robin Hart & Catherine Moffat

[cathmoffat@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cathmoffat@yahoo.co.uk)

### Funeral Contact

Kate Powis

## The Dead Duck

A woman brings a very limp duck to a veterinary surgeon.

As she lays her beloved pet duck on the table, the vet puts his stethoscope on the bird's chest and listens carefully.

A moment later the vet shakes his head and says sadly, "I'm really sorry mam, but your duck, Cuddles, has passed away."

The woman becomes quite distressed and begins to cry.

"Are you sure?" she says with tears flooding from her eyes.

Hello Friends!

It's a funny old time of year. The church is experiencing Advent, the time of year of anticipation or waiting. Similarly, as a child we could touch nothing of the fruit display and eat none of the Christmas cookies that were being baked and put into jars until the big day. But nowadays we wait for nothing. The decorations go up on December 1st, Christmas music starts playing on the radio and school or work activity limps on but is more focussed on plays, parties and a big turkey dinner. I am always sad when Christmas appears to stop on the second day of the feast. Noone wishes Merry Christmas then and the carols give way to far less special, generic music.

## Notes from the Minutes

Area Meeting Saturday 16 November 2024 at Colchester

Jenny Kay

Members and attenders from all the LMs met in worship in the morning with our Administrative Assistant present.

**Membership** One new member was admitted as we agreed a transfer out or another. Following the appointments today the work on the printed Book of Members and Atenders to be carried out by the Administrative Assistant , present at the Meeting can go ahead.

**Appointments** The following were agreed and all those released were thanked for their service.

- Trustees, Jenny Kay, Liz Procter and Sylvia Jeffcock will be replaced by Jan Hutchinson, Chris
- We have not been able to appoint a Treasurer. The matter

Right now, my inbox is full of Black Friday offers that keep getting extended and this cold has tied me to the sofa under a blanket for days. I worry as I have no idea how I'll get through the next three weeks, the gift-buying, trips to London and hosting we've got planned.

But as I write this, as I reflect, I can see just how lucky I am. I've a healthy family, a home, enough to eat and we're warm. I've a job that right now I enjoy, happy relationships with family and a Meeting that I know is precious.

Before I sat down to write, I'd forgotten how fortunate I was. There are so many people for whom a slice of that life would be just about Heaven.

Becky Hallewell

is with Trustees who are looking into the possibility of paying the accountant for setting payments and having all trustees as signatories to AM accounts. A named treasurer will be required.

- Elders Simon Banks, Sylvia Jeffcock, Robin Hart and Robert Parkes are happy to continue their appointments. A third Friend to join the Funeral Team is sought .
- Pastoral Friends Anne Kurra and Jenny Linstead have completed their service. Colchester Meeting is asked to find two Friends to replace them.
- Safeguarding appointed trustee is Sylvia Jeffcock . Trustees are investigating whether the Safeguarding Officer could be a paid appointment. Online Safeguarding Awareness training has been offered by Ipswich and Diss. Clerks, Pastoral Friends and those working with children, please contact the clerking team.

## Dead Duck (cont.)

“Yes mam, I am sure” the vet responds. “Your duck is definitely dead.”

“But how can you be so sure?” the woman protests. “I mean, you haven’t done any testing on him or anything have you? Perhaps he’s just stunned or in a coma or something.”

The vet rolls his eyes, then turns around and leaves the room.

A few minutes later he returns with a black Labrador retriever.

As the duck’s owner looks on in amazement, the Labrador stands on his hind legs, puts his front paws on the examination table and sniffs around the duck from top to bottom. He then looks up at the vet with sad eyes and shakes his head.

The vet pats the dog on the head and takes it out of the room.

A few minutes later the vet returns with a cat. The cat jumps on the table and delicately sniffs at the bird from its head to its feet. After a moment the cat looks up, shakes its head, meows softly and strolls out of the room.

The vet looks at the woman and says, “Look mam I’m really sorry, but as I said before, this is most definitely a duck that is no longer of this world. Your duck is dead.”

The vet then turns to his computer terminal, hits a few keys and produces a bill, which he hands to the woman.

The duck’s owner, still in shock, looks at the bill and sees it is \$150.

“\$150 just to tell me my duck is dead!” she shrieks with incredulity

The vet shrugs his shoulders and says, “I’m sorry mam. If you’d taken my word for it, the bill would have been \$20. However, with the Lab Report and the Cat Scan, it’s now \$150.”

## Notes from AM Minutes (Cont.)

- AM clerking team Eliza Jones and Sylvia Jeffcock are happy
- continue another 1 year term until December 2025. Subject to availability Jenny Kay has offered to take on a support role to the team. We thank Ann Kurra for her service.
- Newsletter editor, Rebecca Halliwell is content to continue until 2027.
- Contributions clerking to be arranged by trustees. Chris Samuel will continue to pass on contributions received to the accountant.
- Any one interested in managing the AM website should contact the AM clerking team. Kall Kwick will provide training

**Harwich worshiping group.** The worshipping group at Harwich will meet at the Church Hall in Mistley from December 2024 on the first and third Sunday of the month.

**Memorandum of Understanding for Clacton and Earls Colne Local Meetings** were adopted which, detail the sharing of responsibilities between this Area Meeting and the local meeting.

**Burial Ground Policy** An introductory paragraph stating that all burial grounds as open requesting that any plans to use them be referred to trustees

**Meeting for Sufferings Report** Sarah Merritt spoke to the minutes of the Meeting for Suffering held in October. Her report is printed separately on page We are encouraged to discuss matters with Sufferings representative before each Meeting

**Area Meeting events in 2025** The AM clerking team presented a proposal for holding AM events in 2025 based on feedback from local meetings. This includes a more streamlined keeping the business to the essential minimum, lasting for no more than 2 hours, local meetings contributing to the agenda and a time for learning and spiritual development. The following dates and locations were agreed:

- Saturday 8 February, Colchester Meeting House (blended)
- Sunday 13 April, Earls Colne Meeting House
- Saturday 7 June, Sudbury Meeting House
- Sunday 14 September, Clacton Meeting House
- Saturday 9 November, Colchester Meeting House (blended)

**The Future of British Quakerism Conference** Robert Parkes gave a report on this conference held at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre, 18 – 20 October. His flipchart report is on page of this newsletter. We hope to continue a consideration of our situation in our LMs and AM year.

The Meeting for Business was followed by lunch and a discussion led by Sara Merritt and Craig Burrows on interchurch and interfaith relations based on their conference reports which can be found in the August 24 edition of the Newsletter.

## Meeting for Sufferings

5th October 2024

Sara Merritt

Aim: in worship, to gather a vision to lead the national Quakers forward.

All the papers for this meeting are available at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/meeting-for-sufferings-2024-10-agenda-papers-package> and well worth reading.

New Ways of Belonging

We have been challenged to find ways of affirming the “Quakerness” of people who are outside the normal structure of local Sunday meetings for worship, for instance non-geographic online groups. Our current membership process relies on area meetings so those who don’t belong to an area meeting cannot become members. It’s proposed to set up a working group to explore this and support these people. Perhaps Britain Yearly Meeting could act as the “area meeting” for them.

Some concerns were raised that this could allow members of “recognised bodies” to join us when they might not really be in sympathy with Quaker principles, and also perhaps people who were only known online and not in “real life”. We were assured that this would be handled very carefully and it wouldn’t be “carte blanche”. The idea was welcomed with joy by a nurse who could never attend regularly on Sunday mornings but was completely engaged with Quakers through summer camps and other activities.

The idea was approved in principle, the details to be considered by Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM).

Trustees Report – how are the Trustees encouraging the ministry of Quakers nationally?

There are 11 or 12 trustees of the Quakers as a national charity. They deal with, among other things, finance, IT, property, auditing, Quaker structures, and organisational justice.

**We are still mourning the loss of the physical Woodbrooke, but it is exciting to see it expanding its remit in other ways. There is an online café to which we are all invited:**

**<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/his-is-my-woodbrooke/cafe/> This will be an online space where attenders of different courses can drop in and chat!**

Our youth development workers tend to work where there are youth! This isn’t necessarily logical as meetings without youth don’t have support to change that. It is thought that the proposed combination of the two central committees (see below) may release resources to help this situation.

If you value the national ministry of the Quakers, and would like to see more central work to help us develop nationally, you are encouraged to consider contributing financially.

Reviewing central structures

In line with our aim to be a *simple church*, and to make better use of our resources, it is proposed to combine the two central committees Quaker Life (concerned with worship) and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (concerned with action). The two committees find their work often overlaps and it would be easier to work together as one.

We have been invited to share our hopes and concerns about this merger to [governance@quaker.org.uk](mailto:governance@quaker.org.uk), preferably by 13th October.

Palestine and Israel

We had a very powerful time thinking together about the situa-

tion in Palestine and Israel. We heard about the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniers scheme (EAPPI) which is hosted by the Quakers, and which sends people to spend time bearing witness to the treatment of Palestinians. Palestinians simply want people outside to know about the injustice they live under. There were EAs present who spoke movingly about what they had seen.

It was proposed that we adopt the statement of a QPSW working group: “Having studied the available legal opinions and considered the evidence, we feel that the term apartheid is an appropriate one for the situation, and that there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza.” These words are emotive and painful but we agreed that sometimes it is important to tell the truth about what we see, however painful it might be. True peace and reconciliation can only be based on truth. We have a role as prophets as well as reconcilers, and sometimes painful truth has to be addressed before true reconciliation can be worked on.

It was acknowledged that these words could be an obstacle to our UK interfaith work with the Jewish community, and that it is important to deepen relationships simultaneously with truth-speaking.

My summary feels inadequate for this deep and wide concern – please read the papers on the link above, pages 48-57

Reparations Working Group

This group was tasked with supporting a Quaker response to our growing realisation that there are things in our history of which we are not proud, in particular the contribution of slave-labour to our society. We did not treat others as equal human beings in the sight of God. We took people’s children, their land, their language and their resources, and

the effects are still causing untold harm.

The group has worked for a challenging year and has produced an excellent report, page 58-60. They have an ongoing blog at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog>. (It is possible to filter by topic; select 'reparations'). They have supported local meetings in researching their history, producing exhibitions, and making links with those affected by this injustice. They are keen to visit your meeting to help on your journey! There will also be a Woodbrooke course about how to make this live for your community.

Their next challenges are how to take the international discussion forward and what is UK Quakers' role in that.

The group is urgently seeking a new member, about an hour and a half online per month plus two meetings per year. If you have a heart for this concern please apply through the central nominations committee.

The Quaker Marriage Declaration

## Meeting for Business as Spiritual Rehearsal

Eliza Jones

This excellent article by John Andrew Gallery gives a helpful personal perspective of what in a Quaker Business Meeting. He describes meeting for worship as a spiritual practice, an opportunity to practice and develop skills to make the performance of our daily lives more spiritually centred. If the way we live our daily lives – the way our lives speak from a spiritual centre - is the equivalent of the actual performance, then meeting for worship with attention to business – the process of interacting with each other in a spiritually centred way – is the intermediary step, the bridge between practice and performance that the concept of rehearsal implies.

There was an enthusiastic response to the national consultation on this subject. Please take a look at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/marriage-declaration-responses-to-consultation-mfs-oct-2024>. It is very encouraging that so many friends have taken time to grapple with the question, which was, in the Quaker marriage declaration should we allow the words “through divine assistance” or “with God’s help” to be omitted or should there be another option?

“It is the Lord’s work, we are but witnesses” (George Fox, Quaker Faith and Practice 16.01)

Without a reference to the divine would this meaning be lost? Without a faith statement what differentiates ours from a civil ceremony? How do we include Quakers who cannot make this statement with integrity?

There seemed to be unity that the couple needs assistance from somewhere (so the sentence should not be omitted completely) but not on where that assist-

ance might come from. There were contributions remembering the deeply sacred nature of a Quaker marriage, and recognising the importance of being held by a local meeting.

The consultation also asked whether we felt that it was essential that both partners made identical declarations, and all answers to this question were also received.

MfS was starting to lean towards a third option of wording involving “in the light” but we ran out of time before reaching unity on this, so it was delegated to the Quaker Life committee for further consideration.

The conclusion was that our sincere discernment has not yet reached unity but that the sincere discernment was wonderful!

I so enjoyed my first experience of Meeting for Sufferings. What a wonderful, worshipful way to do business! I felt proud to be part of such a wonderful church.

Reflecting on how the practices he learns in meeting for worship inform his behaviour in meeting for worship with attention to business, he comes up with the following results:

Being present – the best decisions, the ones that strive to seek the will of God in a matter, require as much focussed attention as does sitting in worship waiting expectantly to hear or be inspired to give a spiritual message.

Patience – to let the process unfold and allow time for the right decision to emerge; to listen attentively to agenda items of less interest; to be engaged in the discussion but detached from the outcome and open to unexpected influences and ideas.

remembering God – searching for God’s way with respect to the matters under consideration, not

his way or the way of other’s present, which helps listen to differing opinions in a non-judgmental manner.

knowing when to speak - “wait and watch”. If he waits, someone else may express his point of view, and there’s no need for him to speak at all. If he watches – in this case listen, and listen



non-judgmentally – then he could change his mind about what he intended to say and either speak or not as seems appropriate or be sufficiently detached to see a middle path through differing opinions that can lead to a decision. If he speaks he tries to be guided by another practice from meeting for worship – not starting with or frequently using the word “I”. This helps him speak to the issue rather than to his opinion. When he disagrees with the decision

# The Future of Quakerism

Jenny Kay

Robert Parkes attended this conference from 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> October and gave a flip chart presentation to AM. Further information may be found on the Woodbrooke website. [Using the code obtainable by email to:learning@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:learning@woodbrooke.org.uk) if you have not received it by other means.

Numbers are falling  
We are ageing  
Focussing on our LMs  
**But**  
"Borderlands"  
Worshipping Groups  
Quaker camps  
Online networks

## A Choice of Pathways



*The Grey Havens reference: The Lord of the Rings - J.R.R. Tolkien  
Bowls Club - Paul Parker  
Transformation, Simple, Radical, Spiritual - Ben Pink Dandelion*

## Quaker Faith & Practice 10.05

Read at Area Meeting 16.11.2024

We recognise a variety of ministries. In our worship these include those who speak under the guidance of the Spirit, and those who receive and uphold the work of the Spirit in silence and prayer. We also recognise as ministry serv-

## We might drop off a cliff



### What's stopping us from making the jump?

Why do we struggle to explain what it means to be a Quaker?

Can we still not decide whether we are a religious society or not? So do you believe in God?

What exactly is a confident Quaker voice?

### Quo Vadis?

Friend + 1 = thrive

Providing a consistent way for newcomers to learn about Quaker practice & spirituality

Support & nurture the ministry of young people

Actively inviting people to explore the Quaker way ie.

Outreach

Sow seeds.

We can be sowers of seeds. Let us not keep our precious seeds in our pockets.

### You jump off the cliff and trust that the wind will hold you.



ice on our many committees, hospitality and childcare, the care of finance and premises, and many other tasks. We value those whose ministry is not in an appointed task but is in teaching, counselling, listening, prayer, enabling the service of others, or other service in the meeting or the world.

## We've been here before

In this very room – 10 years ago!  
At an Area Meeting in 2014

### Extracts from Minute 2014/46 Discerning our purposes – next steps

How we might raise our profile in the wider community, and become more visible, either as individuals or as a body. It is not necessary to spend a lot of money to do this. One way of getting noticed is by doing something.

We want to become more visible in our communities, enabling those who may be searching for Quakers to find us.

We recognise the "borderlands", which are hidden and secret places in which the seeds of our future work will grow.

"Live up to the light thou hast, and more will be granted thee."  
QF&P 26:04 Caroline Fox 1841

"By their actions shall you know them"

"Ye shall know them by their fruits";-Matthew 7.16



The purpose of all our ministry is to lead us and other people into closer communion with God and to enable us to carry out those tasks which the Spirit lays upon us.

London Yearly Meeting, 1986

## When Quakers Disagree

November 1, 2010

By ArthurMeyerBoyd

Guess what? Quakers have disagreements among themselves and in their monthly meetings for business. Nothing unusual about that—we're human, after all. What is unusual is how Friends address disagreements.

In hard decisions where there are seemingly intractable conflicting positions held by members of a meeting, there are several Quaker process "tools" that could be used. Over the years I have observed these being utilized in both large and small monthly meetings, watched as seasoned clerks at Friends Committee on National Legislation used these with amazing results, and used each of these myself in several periods of service as clerk of Stony Run Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

1. In the midst of discussion when the way is not clear, or is blurred by tense feelings, pause for a period of worship. This provides an opening for reflection on all that has been said, reconsideration of one's own position, and discernment of a new way forward. Sometimes that is a third way that wasn't apparent before. Often it is someone other than the clerk who suggests that "we settle into a period of worship," much to the relief of the clerk who is trying mightily to see a way forward.

2. Lay the matter over. This also allows for reflection, and for what Friends call "seasoning." It allows time for conversations among those with differing views, so greater understanding can emerge.

3. Ask the proposing person or committee to reshape the propos-

al to incorporate as many of the suggestions, and address as many of the objections, as possible, and to bring the proposal back to a future monthly meeting.

4. Have some of the people with concerns, together with some of the people who support the proposal, form a small group to reshape the proposal, and bring a revision back to a future monthly meeting.

A Friends monthly meeting, having done those things, might nearly be in agreement to accept the proposal. Yet still some Friends may not agree. They may say that they do not think sense of the meeting on this issue has been reached, or they may state that they are "led to stand in the way." This is their right and moral responsibility to do if they see their hesitation as a deep spiritual conviction. The Meeting should then listen to the concerns of the individual and prayerfully consider whether that person's sense of the Truth (or elements of it) might be closer to the Truth than what had previously been proposed. Sometimes it is, and that person's statement becomes the fully embraced sense of the meeting. But sometimes it is not. So, what does a meeting do?

5. Between sessions, have some people visit individually with, and "sit with the concerns" of, those who are not ready to accede to what the rest of the meeting seems ready to agree upon. This may result in a way opening for agreement, or possibly a third way, which had not been apparent before, to emerge at a future meeting for worship with a concern for business.

6. Have a "threshing session," a meeting at a separate time that is specifically not for decision-making. Normal practices of a Quaker meeting for business are relaxed so that Friends can speak more than once to an issue, can

speak to a point just made, or can ask a question of a previous speaker. The clerk might even ask for a "straw poll" of opinions at "this point in our discussion so far," or go around the circle giving each person an opportunity to speak in turn. The special role of a threshing session is that it allows everyone to say what they think without the burden of needing to make a decision. It enables folks to speak strongly yet be able to change their position and not merely defend their point of view in anticipation of a decision about to be made.

**So, what if agreement still cannot be reached?**

7. Friends operate by "sense of the meeting," not consensus. This is not the same as unity or "everyone has agreed." So, the clerk might state that "we appear to have reached a sense of the meeting to do X, would (address by name the objecting person or persons) be willing to stand aside?"

8a. If the objecting persons are not willing to stand aside, the clerk could test with the meeting whether the sense of the meeting is to do X, and "knowing that some Friends are not in unity with this decision, are Friends ready to approve this as the Sense of the Meeting?" If the meeting so decides, the objecting persons might ask to be recorded as not being in unity with the decision, or if they do not ask to be recorded, the minutes would note that "two (or whatever number) Friends were not in unity with this decision."

To do this tears at the fabric of the meeting community, and is done only as a last option when the rest of the meeting is clear that adherence to Truth calls for making the proposed decision. The decision would need to be one of clear spiritual necessity for the meeting and not merely convenience, and it needs to be recog-

nized that subsequent healing will be necessary. Similarly for the individual, the objection would need to be a matter of clear spiritual calling for that person and not merely convenience. In other words, all persons of whatever position on the matter must ask themselves: “Is my sense of what God or Divine Will or the Spirit or Truth calls our meeting to do in this moment based on my sense of that transcendent calling, or is it based only on my preferences, prejudices, or convenience?”

8b. Or, if the objecting persons are not willing to stand aside, the clerk could judge that the objection is significant enough that the meeting should not proceed on this matter, and test that “sense of

the meeting” with those present and suggest that the meeting approve laying aside the matter indefinitely. Much like the benefit of a threshing session, laying the matter aside indefinitely removes the pressure to work the matter, and opens space for reflection and new thinking, the magic Friends call “seasoning.” The matter could return to a future (indefinite) meeting for business—if appropriate—after further seasoning. Again, it needs to be recognized that subsequent healing will be needed. Stony Run has made such decisions, and in some cases the matter was brought forward by concerned persons months later and satisfactorily resolved, and on other occasions never arose again.

There is Quaker lore that any individual can stand in the way of a decision and prevent the decision from being taken. This is not entirely true. “Standing in the way” is a mutual responsibility between the individual and meeting to test our sense of the Truth as we are imperfectly able to sense it at the time. But no one, after prayerful consideration by the meeting, can “stand in the way of a decision” without the meeting’s permission. The meeting can proceed, in loving tenderness to those who cannot join in the decision.————

*Arthur, a member of Stony Run Meeting in Baltimore, Md., is associate executive secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation.*

## An Invitation to a Journey

Bayard Fry

One of Quakerism’s beauties is its willingness to journey with other religions. There is no spirit of fear, scarcity, or need to convert. Despite Quakers’ diverse experiences and beliefs, our direction of travel unites us. While we have Christian roots, can Christian beliefs define us? And our willingness to work gladly with other religions enables us to draw on many sources of wisdom.

One problem arises when people ask us to explain our silent worship, which is often a mystery too deep for words. Quaker historian William C. Braithwaite and influential Quaker Rufus Jones argue that Quakerism is mystical. This parable may help to explain.

There is an ancient story about a deep-sea fish that, one day, ends up in a small pond. In the pond, a conversation begins with a pond fish. This pond fish is excited as it has never left the pond.

“Pleased to have a new friend”, the pond fish says to the ocean fish. “My pond is so deep! Watch me swim to the bottom.”

The fish swiftly dives to the bottom of the pond, returning to exclaim,

“Do you see how deep it is?” The ocean fish says, “You swim well, but where I come from, it’s different.”

The pond fish wants to hear more about the differences between a pond and an ocean, but the ocean fish can only say, “It’s hard to explain; I hope you can experience it for yourself one day.”

Quakerism speaks to the part of religion that most shy away from: the profound inner journey, revelations, and surrender. While all Quakers embark on this inner journey, many people are more comfortable in a small pond.

We are the “Religious Society of Friends.” Religion focuses on belief and practice. Religions often dogmatise their beliefs in the mistaken idea that this will unite people. Sadly, this can draw



boundaries that exclude shrinking the pond. Jesus excluded only those who were drawing the boundaries, the judgmental.

Quakerism focuses less on belief and more on the inner journey and outward testimony. Our silent inward journey guides and empowers the outward journey. However, it is difficult to explain if you have never experienced it, like the pond's fish. Time spent in silence and listening helps us walk the steps we testify to simplicity, truth/integrity, equality, peace, etc.

Mystical movements in other traditions also emphasise inner experience and qualities over beliefs.

Buddha: “Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.”

Jesus: “If you wish to walk in my footsteps, you must relinquish your desires and carry your cross.”



Rumi: "The wound is where the Light enters you."

Accepting that all truth belongs to 'God' means it does not matter where it originates; we can learn from it all.

Politics and politicians may not have the answers to the world's problems. But in silent Quaker worship, the world's been changed. This has been our history and should be our future. People are fleeing traditional religion. Surveys refer to them as 'Nones,' people with no religious affiliation, but the surveys also find they have a spiritual longing but a distaste for judgmental religion. We must let them know who we are and that we do not judge. They

should find a natural home in Quakerism, but do they know who or where we are?

Every one of us has a unique journey. Our experiences can help others see through our eyes. However, when we come together we discover ourselves more profoundly by letting go of our selfish individuality and surrendering to the Light and our mystical connectedness. The 'Nones' struggle to be spiritual alone; we could help them find community. Let us not keep the Light hidden; people need us.

Can you improve on this Quaker elevator pitch?

"Quakers journey in communal

silence seeking direction from the Light (God/mystery/truth). This empowers us to see "that of God" (or good) in everyone, calling us to let our lives speak testimonies: peace, equality, simplicity, integrity, etc. We welcome the truth from wherever. We are open and welcome those of all faiths or none to experience this spiritual journey for themselves. We won't tell you what to believe, but we will sit with you as we discern together, guided by a mystery more profound than ourselves."

Only 85 words; what would you add or subtract to a maximum of 90 words? Over to you, Friends.

Replies to: [thequietoftheland@gmail.com](mailto:thequietoftheland@gmail.com)

## The Erie Canal

John Hall

At the time that the Erie Canal was being built across New York state, shares in the project were a popular investment among Friends. So it was with some dismay that the members of New York Meeting

heard such investments denounced by a powerful speaker.

A main argument was that if the Lord had intended to put a waterway there he would have done so; and further more, who was man that he should presume by his own works to make such a channel? The meeting, subdued under the effects of the oratory,

settled into a disturbed silence. It was finally broken by a man of slight build and not too strong voice, who quoted, "And Jacob digged a well."

[It is perhaps appropriate to point out that no such phrase appears in the Bible although there are a number of references to Jacob's well]

## Quakers

David Lawrence

"The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a radical, contemporary and free-thinking faith organisation whose roots are in Christianity.

Nowadays we are very diverse. Although most modern day Quakers see Jesus as a great spiritual teacher and his words as a guide to action there are many different views amongst us. However whether we are a 'theist' or 'non-theist' Quaker we all place special value on actively living the four Quaker testimonies of equality,



simplicity, truth and peace.

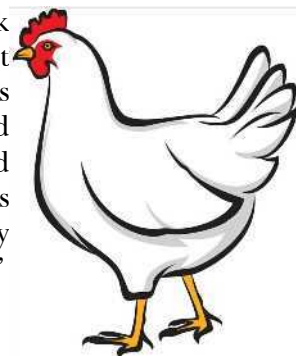
Quakers believe in an inclusive faith – which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge any discrimination against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a faith community which welcomes accepts, supports and values individuals and serves all people."

## London Yearly Meeting

It is said that some years ago, London Yearly Meeting was in session, late on a warm afternoon. All the doors and windows were open, and Friends had grown somewhat sleepy, when a hen appeared at the door, and walked up the aisle.

The clerk looked at her over his glasses, and then asked "What has thee to lay before us?"



## Order of White Poppy Service

We are called to live "in the virtue of **that** life and power **that** takes away the occasion of **all** wars." Advices and Queries, 31.

We gather here today, to remember **all** those who have died, or been affected by war, on **all** sides, and in **all** wars, both past **and** present.

Military personnel and civilians alike, who have been injured or died as a result of conflict.

Those who have been injured or died, while working for humanitarian organisations.

Refugees displaced, communities destroyed, families torn apart, and children orphaned.

Military personnel and civilians, who still bear the psychological, or physical scars of war.

In our remembrance we commit to work for peace. In our own relationships and our communities, as well as nationally and internationally.

As Willian Penn said "Let us **then** try what **love** will do."

### Laying of the Wreath

In remembrance of **all** the military and civilians, who have been victims of war.

May we **all** work hard for peace.

We will now have silence for our own thoughts and prayers, and to **hold** all those affected by war in the **Light**.



## White Poppy Wreath

Photo of Sudbury Friends at the war memorial in Sudbury this

morning, taken shortly after we had met to lay a white poppy wreath, inscribed "In remembrance of all the military

and civilians who have been the victims of war. May we all work hard for peace".

Robert Parkes