

Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Annual Reports from April 1, 2022 – March 30, 2023
State of Society Reports from Monthly Meetings for 2022
Reports from Half-Yearly Meetings for 2022
Memorial Minutes for 2022

Received by July 2023

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Notes on this document

This is a compilation of reports and Memorial Minutes received for Canadian Yearly Meeting for the July 2023 sessions. Due to the unexpected illness of the clerk, these reports were not available then.

The following Canadian Yearly Meeting entites have been laid down:

Contributions Committee
Epistle Summarizing Committee
Personnel Management Group

Reports from CYM Standing Committees

Archives Committee - Annual Report

Since Canadian Yearly Meeting in Session 2022 the Archives Committee (AC) has met ten times. General practice is to meet monthly. Our work continues to be directed by our Reporting and Clearness 2021 and the Turner Report (2021) the in-depth review of the Canadian Quaker Library and Archives (CQLA) done by James Turner, AC member, retired professor of library and archival studies.

Accomplishments

- The Canadian Yearly Meeting Archivist, Michelle Tolley, continues to be key in all the work of the Archives Committee. Her work schedule blends work on site at the CQLA located at Pickering College, Newmarket, Ontario supplemented by work at home. We are pleased at the way Michelle integrates into an effective staff team for CYM. Michelle's report on her work is incorporated below. Archives Committee is deeply aware that it is best able to serve CYM with the full-time professional skills that Michelle brings to her role. We note that this work enriches not only Monthly Meetings and CYM but also serves as outreach to the Canadian and international communities of those interested in Canadian Quaker history.
- AC is aware that accessibility to the CQLA, with its limited online presence, is a challenge. Friends and Meetings at a distance find it more difficult to access services although they may always contact Michelle with requests. Consequently a significant accomplishment this year has been the selection, installation and initial populating of information in ArchivesSpace, a program that provides improved information about the contents of collections in the CQLA's vault. This information will be posted online, improving accessibility for everyone. It also is a preliminary task that will enable CQLA to move to digitizing the collection.
- We are delighted with the ways in which Meetings and individuals are reaching out to deposit their records at the CQLA. Meetings are depositing past and current records. Individuals are looking for a safe place to deposit the letters and papers of those who have contributed to the history of Quakers in Canada. We note that there are an increasing number of options for depositing:
 - Mailing hard copies to the CQLA at Pickering College, 16945 Bayview Ave, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 4X2
 - Electronic deposits at archives-minutes@quaker.ca
 - A new option: creating a google drive for Meeting records and then giving the CYM Archivist access to the google drive. She can then grab and print records for the Meeting's collection as the Meeting uploads its records. cym-archivist@quaker.ca
- During the year the CQLA was able to assist a Meeting to retrieve its records. A filing cabinet full of its archives disappeared during the pandemic leaving clerks and the local Meeting archivist floored. The Meeting had deposited its records which meant that the Meeting could retrieve its history from the CQLA archives.
- Another request came to me as clerk of AC concerning finding documentation related to a Meeting's ownership of its building. Although we were able to provide suggestions of potential sources for this

information, we were unable to respond to the request as the needed document had **not** been deposited at the CQLA archives.

- During CYM in session we offered a workshop on ways of doing oral histories, an important way of providing the voices and experiences of Friends, especially our Elders, for the future. The recorded SIG will be available on the CQLA's improved website once that is complete.
- AC has begun rebuilding its relationship with the Canadian Friends Historical Association (CFHA). Begun in 1972 CFHA was created by Friends including Kathleen Hertzberg and Grace Pincoe to support the work of the Records Committee, now Archives Committee, by encouraging interest and research in Canadian Quaker history. CFHA used to report on the floor of CYM. Included in its continuing projects have been offering a bi-weekly study group on George Fox's Journal and a transcription project which saw CFHA photographing some of the earliest records in the CQLA vault for transcription and posting online. Over the years the two organizations have drifted apart. At its last annual general meeting two members of AC joined the CFHA Executive to facilitate communication and collaboration. Both have taken on leadership roles, and another AC member has joined the executive, as CFHA, now also a registered charity, seeks renewal as it is experiencing a period of significant weakness.

Challenges

- Funding continues to be the most significant challenge for the AC. We were delighted when CYM fully funded the Archivist salary for a second year. Yet most effective work is done when there is longer term assured funding for this essential staff role. AC unsuccessfully applied to the Documentary Heritage Communities Program fund of Libraries and Archives Canada for staffing dollars for the project of populating ArchivesSpace. However, the feedback received included encouragement to consider future applications. We plan to explore this further when we are preparing to digitize the collection.

Work with Change And Sustainable Transformation (CAST)

We were encouraged by a very successful meeting with CAST Committee members. We valued the opportunity to provide an in-depth review of our work to CAST, enriched by a time of sharing grounded in worship. We appreciate steps that CAST is taking to seek funding for the CYM Archivist.

Work going forward

We look forward to the foreseeable accomplishment of **two initiatives** on which we are working.

- Two members have led our work on revising the content of the Archives section of the CYM website. We look forward to working with CYM Communications Coordinator, Holly Spencer, in completing this work which will provide improved information and easier access to CQLA content.
- We have spent significant time in the past two years creating and updating policy for the CQLA. We look forward to sharing this with Friends as way opens.

The Quakers in Canada: A History We invite Monthly Meetings without copies of *The Quakers in Canada: A History* by Arthur G Dorland to accept free copies from the Archives Committee in keeping with Recommendation M16 of the Turner Report. We also encourage Meetings to ask us for copies to

donate to local libraries. We ask that Meetings only cover the postage cost. We also will bring copies to CYM in Winnipeg to avoid the need for mailing.

In closing: Archives Committee remains deeply grateful for our collaborative working relationship with Pickering College which hosts the CQLA. We have appreciated our growing relationship with Cinde Lock, the new Head of School. We are aware that without Pickering College's significant contribution of 904 sq ft of climate-controlled space accommodating both the CQLA Library and Archives and their support services we could not do this work.

We warmly thank all the Meetings that now are depositing their records. We continue to encourage Meetings, gatherings and CYM Committees to integrate regular depositing of their records into their annual cycles so that we have the most complete record of Quakerism in Canada possible.

I personally want to thank members of the Archives Committee and Michelle for their work over the past year. I was forced to take several months health break this year. I so appreciated others stepping forward to keep the work going. We also are deeply thankful for the financial support of the Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust, individual donors to Archives Committee and the support contributions of CYM and its staff. It is this collaboration that enables the work of the CQLA to take place.

Elaine Bishop, Clerk

Archivist's Report

2022 was an incredibly exciting and busy time for the Archives. I began this position as CYM Archivist in November of 2021, so I consider 2022 to be my first full year working with the collection. As I reflected on my past reports to compile this summary, I was amazed by just how much things have changed since I started. After the extended closure there was quite a lot of housekeeping to do. There will always be ongoing tidying and organization, however getting through that first major clean-up and then being able to move into research inquiries and other larger projects was very satisfying.

As per the Turner Report, there were a number of tasks and projects that the Archives Committee wanted to make progress on. One of the more important objectives we completed, and something I am very happy with, is the purchase of a new software to manage the inventory of our CQLA Vault collection. Drawing on some experience I had with choosing a new library software at Pickering College, I researched a number of different choices that would be effective and affordable. The decision was made to go with ArchivesSpace, which is an open-source software. As the year has progressed I've been working with the software to understand how to use it effectively by inputting data and reading the extensive manuals that are available. As this process of inputting our Vault inventory will take quite a bit of time, I also wanted to make sure the current inventory is as up-to-date as possible. I undertook the task of entering approximately 100 pages of handwritten inventory from the previous archivist. I also wanted to make sure that the Monthly Meeting minutes inventory was up to date, so I went through all of the physical boxes and checked them against the inventory on the website, then updated as necessary (including printing and filing all the minutes that built up during the closure).

While I love working directly with the collection and its organization, I was thrilled with the many varied requests that came in during this first year. I cannot cover everything in this short report, but I will list some standouts.

- 1) The most involved inquiry came in the form of an email all in French from Michel Megard at the Swiss Quaker Archives. He was looking for more information about Marcel Rymenans (Rijmenans), a Belgian ambassador who visited Ottawa MM and wrote a few articles about Canadian Quakers. Members of the Archives Committee assisted with translations, research, and even got a quote from a member of Ottawa MM who remembered Marcel and his wife visiting. Michel was very pleased and thankful, and he copied me on an email sent to a number of European Quakers with all our research compiled and thanking the CQLA.
- 2) A student from St Andrews University in Scotland wrote and requested some information about Lloyd Williams. She originally started to write about Williams as a mathematician but found his Quaker connections really interesting. I scanned a few relevant pages of 'My Father, Lloyd Williams' by Christine Williams Ayoub and was also able to direct her to the transcript of Christine's oral history interview.
- 3) A teacher from the Silver Wattle Quaker Centre in Australia reached out to see if she could get a copy of the Canadian Quaker Pamphlet no. 69 'Prophetic Community' by Helen Bayes to use in an upcoming class. The publishing company no longer exists, but since the pamphlet was relatively short I was able to scan it for her.
- 4) I've hosted three separate in-person groups in the Archives this past year which was made easier as Pickering College eased their COVID-19 protocols in the spring. Sharon Temple came by in summer 2022 to do an inventory of their material that is housed in the Vault and I was there with them for a number of days. We also had a hybrid Archives Committee meeting where the local members were able to come and stay at Pickering College for a weekend. Finally, a researcher looking for cemetery information around the Yonge Street Meeting House was in at the beginning of 2023 and I pulled a number of files and minute books for her to look at.

I believe it is worth noting that during this first year I was able to attend a number of different webinars, lunch & learns, and conferences that concerned different areas of the archival world. It is also worth noting that many of these sessions were completely free of charge which allowed me to access helpful professional development at no cost to CYM. Through these experiences I was able to get information and support on things such as photo preservation, outreach, and dealing with specifically Quaker collections. I also met more people in this field which led to me being asked to participate in the Society of American Archivists Religious Collections committee who organize and run a lot of these great webinars. I have connected with Quaker archivists through listservs as well as direct emails and virtual meetings with archivists at Swarthmore College. I have also had the opportunity to speak to and – more recently – meet in person many members of CYM, whether they are on committees or from monthly meetings.

In addition to the requests, some of the other tasks I've worked on have included: writing articles for the new Archives Corner feature in the Canadian Friend, help plan and create content for the Special Interest Group presentation at the annual online gathering, creating/adapting forms for things such as donations or accessions, working on Archives Committee policy documents, and creating standards for entering collection data. I also worked on a funding application for the Documentary Heritage Communities Program.

Looking ahead, there are so many goals to work towards as we make the Canadian Quaker Library & Archives even better. I am, however, much more excited than daunted by these prospects. The Archives contains such a wealth of information that people from all over the world can benefit from, and I'm looking forward to continuing to serve both the Quaker community and everyone else who is passionate about CYM's history.

Michelle Tolley, CYM Archivist
April 20, 2023

Camp NeeKauNis - Annual Report

The 2022 season saw the return of Camp NeeKauNis Programs!

After much deliberation and a threshing session with Directors regarding our COVID-19 protocols the Camp NeeKauNis Steering Committee was delighted to be able to announce the return of many of our beloved Camp NeeKauNis Programs for our 2022 season. Thanks to our committed Directors and incredible Cooks we were able to offer Work Camp, Community Camp, Family Camp, and Carry on Discovering (COD) Camp once again, as well as one children's program "Tween Camp" - which combined Junior and Intermediate age campers. Unfortunately we were unable to find a Director for Teen Camp.

It was a joy to have these communities gather at Camp once again and we celebrated the return of familiar faces as well as the opportunity to meet new F/friends. As part of our efforts to minimize the risks of COVID-19 for our community our session numbers were smaller, and camps were only 6 nights long in order to reduce contact between camp communities. Our COVID-19 protocols went beyond those required by the Ontario Ministry of Health and included rapid testing prior to attending camp programs, as well as requiring vaccination for campers as well as staff at the 90th anniversary and for COD Camp. We feel blessed that we got through our 2022 season without a single case of COVID-19 at Camp!

Camp's 90th Anniversary celebration took place over the August long weekend and was a wonderful reunion of F/friends, many of whom hadn't been to Camp in years, or decades! Time spent together included many favorite Camp activities, including swim period, games nights in Nelson Hall, Meeting on the Hill, a campfire, and ended off with a rollicking Talent Night. The commemorative t-shirt based on a rock tour with our Camp buildings and their dates of construction was popular and we took the opportunity to commemorate Jim and Bobbi Adamson's contributions to Camp through naming the porch on Haslam cottage the "Adamson Porch" with a sign made by Ethan Chiddicks from a piece of NeeKauNis oak.

Our 2022 season also saw the return of many of our outside rental groups as well as a couple of new groups, and we are grateful to have this revenue once again. This was also the 2nd season for our off-season (winter) Camp House rentals, the viability of which we continue to assess.

Finances continue to be a bit of a balancing act as we haven't recovered to our pre-pandemic level of operation yet. This year we had increased fee revenue with a return to offering programs and our outside rentals bounced back to cover the cost of our Camp Administrator. However, we had more expenses and significantly lower donations than in 2020 & 2021 when our community stepped up with donations to carry us through. As such we ended the year with a deficit of just over \$10,000. We continue to be grateful for the support of the Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust as well as donations from individuals and Monthly Meetings.

A major change for Camp this year was the retirement of our dedicated Treasurer, Cathy Jolliffe, who has served Camp NeeKauNis for close to 3 decades. We are immensely grateful to Cathy for keeping our finances in good order and for being the constant through many iterations of the Camp NeeKauNis Committee. As part of this transition we decided to move to using Quickbooks online starting Jan 1, 2023 in the hopes that it will be easier to integrate Camp's books with CYM's in the future.

Camp NeeKauNis' Physical Development (PD) Committee continues to do the necessary and ongoing work of assessing and repairing Camp's infrastructure. They organized many work weekends in both the spring and fall of 2022. With the low turnout for Work Camp this year we have decided that work weekends are the best way to address specific projects. Of particular note in 2022 Amitie & White Feather cabins were leveled which has restored them as usable cabins. Extensive mouse proofing was also done, and Haslam's renovation is nearing completion with new furniture purchased. We thank our dedicated PD volunteers for all their hard work and for the continuity provided by having an onsite volunteer throughout the summer season. We are also relieved to now have three trained water persons for our water system.

We continued to hold our Steering Committee meetings virtually during 2022 and our greatest challenge is that the Camp Committee continues to be underpopulated. This results in individuals carrying a disproportionately heavy load, which was exacerbated this year as several of our Steering Committee members had to step back for personal reasons. As well, due to 2 years without programs the on-site mentoring that usually happens was not possible and as such we find ourselves in renewal mode, drawing out new people and embarking on a period of capacity building and training. We have a passionate and dedicated core group though who continue to persevere to make sure that Camp happens!

Exciting things are also in the works as Camp is discussing with the Change and Sustainable Transformation (CAST) group how CYM might utilize Camp NeeKauNis for its annual sessions next summer. Proposals for CYM to use Camp have come up several times over the last few decades and it is feeling like we are much closer to having this be a reality in 2024. It will be a lot of work and we know that Camp's facilities don't suit everyone but we are looking forward to sharing this special place with the wider CYM community!

Education & Outreach - Reporting and Clearness

The current members of the Education and Outreach Committee are Catherine Harding (Clerk), Brent Bowyer, Daniel Haartman, Melanie Burns, Zaley Warkentin (Young Friend).

The mandate of Education and Outreach Committee is: facilitating lifelong religious education among Friends; making our Society known to seekers; being a resource for programming at Friends' gatherings; and encouraging and facilitating visitation and travelling in the ministry.

Education and Outreach [2020 to the present]

Since 2020, this committee has met regularly over the months to work on the tasks listed above. We were greatly supported in this work by the then-CYM Secretary, Cameron Fraser, and we record our deep gratitude for his guidance and knowledge, given that we had entered a phase of questioning and re-structuring of the many processes involved in running CYM operations. For instance, we had many discussions about how to conduct personnel matters as carefully as possible, given provincial and federal labour regulations. These discussions included equitable rates of compensation for instructors applied across the board; details of contractual arrangements that fit with existing CYM budget lines; and considerations regarding intellectual property rights. We have worked long and hard to understand the CYM budgeting structure and how best to design a workable budget for E&O, given that most of our course offerings are not 100% cost recovery. Most of our courses require some degree of subsidy from Education and Outreach budget lines, or funding assistance from Monthly Meetings for individuals attending the courses.

We are currently re-designing the grants program for our organization and are grateful for the guidance and expertise of CYM General Secretary-Treasurer, Tasmin Rajotte. Her assistance has been invaluable. We hope to have a clear set of grant guidelines that will be both easy for users and manageable for the committee to implement. The Secretary's assistance with our applications to the Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust fund over the past three years has been essential. The process has been confusing until recently (Fall 2022), when we were given clear parameters about what we could ask for, and how we should manage funds over the year.

Online Course Offerings and Information Management

Obviously, the global pandemic has impacted every Quaker community around the world, and ours is no exception. All of our course offerings have been online and we continue to grow in knowledge of how to offer courses successfully. Our work entails locating suitable instructors, assessing whether the content will be attractive to users, and determining an appropriate rate of tuition. We do our best to work with existing CYM structures to advertise, facilitate registration, and provide trauma-sensitive instruction that keeps all members safe during a course. Regular communication with participants and follow-up evaluation are also important. At the start of the pandemic, we did not have a clear system in place for delivering online programming. This situation has improved with access to CanadaHelps, but we still don't have a definite plan for how to mount courses efficiently. We seek to not over-burden the CYM Office staff but we must have a workable system for advertisement, registration, communication [access to a Zoom license], plus evaluation at the end of each course. To sum up, we

needed to do a lot of work on personnel issues, information management [advertising; registration; communication], and grants facilitation.

Online Courses [2020 to the present]

Over the past three years, we have become more fluid at locating and supporting online courses with the Woodbrooke Study Centre in the United Kingdom. It is not always easy to attract enough registrants and price the courses in a way that respects varying financial situations and helps us to break even. Over time, we have sought to make sure that we are not running deficits with courses that we offer through our relationship with Woodbrooke. Ideally, these courses would be full cost-recovery, or even generate a small profit that could be returned to a grants funding line and available for individuals wanting to take courses with us or other Quaker organizations in that fiscal year.

We realize that budget issues are very sensitive – we want to respond to people who do need financial assistance. Our grants funding program, when unveiled, should reassure the CYM community that we are encouraging a new awareness of funding limitations from the national organization. Our principle is to create a system that is fair and equitable to as many people as possible, with clear application deadlines and processes. We are aware that it takes time to build a new culture of care around the stewardship of our resources.

We work with two excellent Canadian instructors who have offered courses in Quaker Basics or Quaker Leadings; one version was offered in French, requiring the translation of materials from English to French. These courses are a bit more complicated to offer, and they require work with Personnel Committee and the CYM General Secretary-Treasurer. These courses are also the most difficult to finance: it is hard to offer instruction at anything more than 50% cost recovery, pushing the need for individual grants and funding support onto the CYM budget or individual Monthly Meetings.

Fulfilling the Mandate

We are aware that some areas of our mandate, such as travelling in the ministry, has been greatly impacted over the past three years. We are happy to report that our new budget guidelines offer a clear plan for how to fund this important activity.

Given the small size of our committee, and the tasks we have struggled with, we have very little capacity to participate in supporting programming at CYM annual gatherings.

In the past three years we have been approached by a number of individuals about how to support Seekers. We have not had the “people power” to examine all the possible resources across Canadian Quaker communities but we could tackle this concern once we have our new grants funding guidelines approved and operating.

It is a pleasure to work on these matters relating to Quaker Education and Outreach. We believe deeply in the continued spiritual importance of this work. We also greatly appreciate each other’s gifts and talents in the manner of spiritual education and outreach.

If you are interested in serving, or know someone who might be, please contact Education and

Outreach (e-and-o-clerk@quaker.ca) or the CYM Nominating Committee.

In Friendship, submitted on behalf of members of the committee,

Catherine Harding
Clerk, Education and Outreach Committee
February 21, 2023

Finance Committee - Annual Report

Finance Committee continues to meet by Zoom online. Members of the committee are Fran McQuail, Kitchner Area MM, Clerk; Mark Stanley, Saskatoon MM, Recording Clerk; Pete Cross, Hamilton MM; Wilf Ruland, Hamilton MM; Dan Cooperstock, Toronto MM, until November 2022. The Clerk of Personnel Committee, Holly Turner, Edmonton MM, is also a permanent member of the Committee. The CYM Clerks are ex-officio members.

The professional audit of CYM's 2022 Financial Statements turned up no irregularities. CYM's investments suffered from the fall in the stock market and CYM ended the 2022 year with a decrease in total worth of \$339,000. This is mostly unrealized loss in the investments held in the stock market and does not affect our day-to-day finances. Some expenditures were less than normal again for a second year in a row due to no committee travel and no in-person CYM in Session.

2022 has been a year of staff changes, due to the accountant's retirement last year, and implementation of the staff restructuring recommendations from the Change and Sustainable Transformation Working Group (CAST). Personnel Committee has done the hiring, but it has had implications for Finance Committee. A General Secretary -Treasurer for CYM with an expanded job description including treasurer responsibilities was hired. She is Tasmin Rajotte of Peterborough MM. She works closely with Finance Committee.

After reviewing how the arrangement with Business Sherpa Group of Ottawa in handling the day-to-day bookkeeping and bill paying for CYM; Finance Committee decided to carry on with it. Tasmin was instrumental in working out the details with them in conjunction with Anne Marie Zilliacus, Trustee's Treasurer.

Another new staff person is the newly hired office coordinator, Eva Lacelle. This half time position works in the Ottawa CYM office under the supervision of the CYM Secretary Treasurer.

The 2023 CYM budget was prepared again in the fall of 2022 with the amalgamated fund model. CYM committees are asked to submit their draft budgets by the end of September so the General Secretary-Treasurer can prepare a comprehensive budget for CYM which Finance Committee reviews. This budget then goes to the December Representative Meeting for approval.

Finance Committee still struggles annually with the need to propose deficit budgets. Our annual income is not sufficient to cover all expenses. Our biggest expense is staff, and due to several months in 2022 when we were not fully staffed, our expenses were not as high as budgeted. This has been the case for the past two years, so we have had smaller deficits than expected. With all staff positions now filled, CYM will likely spend all the budgeted amounts in future years.

Finance Committee reviewed concerns of Archives Committee who are looking for ways to find money to support an ongoing Archivist position. We clarified that Archives Committee may look for funds outside of CYM, such as government grants or private foundations grants, as well as receive donations from individuals earmarked for Archives. These funds would be administered by CYM.

The 2023 budget included a second year of funding for an Archivist. This was made possible by another grant from the Samuel Rodgers Memorial Trust (SRMT). Finance Committee finds balancing the financial needs of various parts of CYM challenging as only Ontario activities are eligible for funds from the SMRT.

Another step in the streamlining of CYM's financial system was taken. The two remaining committee bank accounts of Yonge Street Friends Burial Gound and Archives Committee have been amalgamated into the main bank account in Ottawa. This does not affect the separate status of these funds.

Finance Committee approved an Equity and Access Policy for Friends serving on CYM committees.

Equity and Access Policy for Friends Serving on CYM Committees April 2022

Finance Committee has heard a concern that there are Friends for whom the extra expenses for meals and care responsibilities while they are away attending a multi-day CYM Committee would cause financial hardship and could cause a Friend to feel they cannot serve.

To make service to the Yearly Meeting by participation on Committees open to all who are so led, we now have a budget line to cover the expenses as described below.

Meals: Allowed expenses are \$10 for lunches, and \$15 for dinners.

Care Responsibilities: Friends who need to make alternative care arrangements while away from home on committee business and for whom the cost is a barrier to service may claim up to \$50 per day in financial support. This money could be used toward respite child or elder care (to support other family or community members stepping in for the Friend serving) or similar family supports.

Reimbursement or Disbursement: Claims should be accompanied by the receipts (if applicable), plus the date(s), the name of the CYM Committee, and the Committee member's information. Claims should be sent directly to cym-office@quaker.ca.

This policy applies to in-person meetings for CYM Committee Meetings held over two or more days and Representatives attending in-person sessions of Representative Meeting. This policy does not apply for Friends attending Yearly Meeting In Session. Travel is already covered by CYM under the Committee Travel policy.

Finance Committee also approved a Carbon Offset Policy with regards to Staff travel.

Carbon Offset Policy

It is very difficult to predict the amount of travel that required CYM staff, representatives, and committee positions will do in a year due to a range of uncertainties such as Covid. Carbon offset purchases will be based on the actual amount of travel paid for or reimbursed by CYM that happened in the previous year. 5% of the previous year's travel expenditures will be put into the current year's budget for Carbon offset purchases. This policy is informed by CFSC's policy. Friends are also encouraged to do their own carbon offsets for unreimbursed travel, such as travel to the annual gathering.

Two members of Finance Committee gave a Special Interest Group (SIG) by Zoom at the 2022 Yearly Meeting on "Guidelines for Treasurers of Monthly Meetings".

We ended 2022 still with four regular members, as Dan Cooperstock resigned, and Mark Stanley joined us.

Fran McQuail, Finance Committee Clerk

Nominating Committee - Reporting and Clearness

Nominating Committee consists of four members –Ellen Helmuth, (New Brunswick MM), Pauline McKenzie (Wooler MM), Ebby Madera(Toronto MM) and Clerk, Heidi Dick (Calgary MM) . We are continuing to meet regularly on Zoom. We are working on contacting Meetings and receiving nominations for positions on CYM Committees and we will begin the process of discerning these soon. We are also working on identifying queries for our Reporting and Clearness session at CYM 2023.

We are very grateful to the many Friends who volunteer their time to serve on CYM committees. Without you, CYM could not continue to function. We hope that serving also brings you joy and satisfaction.

Covid and the switch to meeting on Zoom has had effects on nominations for CYM. It seems harder to get nominations from Meetings. We are definitely getting fewer nominations. On the other hand, for some Friends it is easier to participate on a committee that meets virtually without the stress and time for traveling. And Friends who may not be able for whatever reason to attend CYM in person have been able to experience CYM business. My sense is that without seeing each other face to face, it is easy to focus our energy on other things and have less time and interest in serving CYM.

We are also finding the process of approving names for CYM committees is changing. We are approving names more frequently as CYM Business Meetings are happening more often and we are also taking names for approval to Representative Meetings. Thus, there are numerous times during the year when nominations can be approved. I see this as helpful to Committees as vacancies can be filled without the long wait until the next CYM or Representative Meeting, if we can find someone to join the committee. Nominating Committee is talking about how this is changing our process of asking for nominations from the Monthly Meetings.

Is a big annual request still the best way? Should we change to a more year-round searching model?

How can we best fill positions as they arise without overwhelming Monthly Meetings with frequent requests for nominations?

Another thing that is happening more is that committees are finding Friends to serve and then bringing that name to Nominating Committee for discernment and approval. This can take away time from committee work, but it also works well as the Friend usually has a good sense of the work of the committee. However, it is still important to get nominations from the Monthly Meetings as there are members with skills to serve on Committees who may not be known to others in CYM. We need to find a balance in these possibilities.

We realize the importance of discernment to the work of Nominating Committee. This is true both for members of Nominating Committee and for all CYM members as we work together to find Friends to fill positions on CYM Committees. Individuals must consider the rightness of allowing their name to go forward for service and sometimes need to see their own gifts and skills through other's eyes. Nominating Committee must receive names and exercise discernment about what each individual can offer to a committee.

What has been the experience of discernment in your life?

What has been affirming to you in seeking to know your gifts and skills?

Does service to CYM conflict with service to your Monthly Meeting?

Discernment and right order are key elements in Quaker process. We seek to be faithful to these as we do our work together.

Heidi Dick,

Clerk Nominating Committee

April 2023

Personnel Committee

We cannot begin this report without first acknowledging the tremendous assistance we have received from Tasmin Rajotte, our General Secretary-Treasurer, whose hard work, patience, and wise counsel has been invaluable.

In 2022/2023 the key focus of the Personnel Committee was on implementing the new staffing structure which had been approved by Trustees in May 2021. The plan which had been approved involved hiring an Office Coordinator and a Communications Coordinator. Pulling together the materials for these competitions required the preparation of job descriptions that needed to be worked and reworked to ensure that they accurately represented the qualifications, skills, and duties that were needed. It was also necessary to research salary information from Charity Village and other small non-profits to ensure that CYM was offering fair compensation.

As the year unfolded the urgency of filling these positions became ever more crucial. First, with regret we accepted the retirement of Lorraine Burke who had worked with CYM as our Accountant since 2017. Some financial duties had been outsourced to Business Sherpa Group, primarily to lighten the load on Lorraine. However, with her retirement it became essential to find someone who could assist Tasmin with her financial responsibilities and who could take on those accounting duties that were not appropriate to assign to Business Sherpa Group.

Also, with the kind assistance of Judith Brown and Dan Cooperstock, the work began of identifying both a financial management software and a CRM (actually a customer relationship management program – sounds very unquakerly, but organizations such as CYM need such a program to manage membership, donation information, and periodical subscriptions.) Those decisions were made, but the work of transferring CYM's data to these new databases proved to be complex and time consuming due to the sheer number of records in the previous database..

We were extremely fortunate in being able to hire Eva Lacelle as our Office Coordinator as she proved to have all the qualifications and experience that we needed to meet this challenge.

CYM is now in a much stronger position as regards our financial management, and down the road the time involved in budgeting and reporting will be greatly reduced. One of the most important tasks solved by the use of the CRM is the preparation of charitable receipts which were formerly prepared manually. This change will bring a huge savings of time.

Because Tasmin, as the agent of the Trustees, has taken on many of the duties formerly performed by Virginia Dawson as the Trustee's Representative on Personnel Management Group, we concluded that PMG could be laid down and that recommendation was approved by Trustees in July, 2022 with the proviso that there should always be a position on Personnel Committee occupied by a representative of Trustees. This decision was reported to Representative Meeting at its meeting on October 15, 2022.

Tasmin, working especially with Maggie Knight, Clerk of Publications & Communications, finalized the job description for our new Communications Coordinator. That position was posted before Christmas and we were delighted to extend an offer to Holly Spencer who began her work with CYM on February

14, 2023.

Other work we undertook during the year included: completing a package for use for employee performance reviews and agreeing with Archives on a template for shared employee supervision. We submitted the Personnel Committee's Risk Assessment to Trustees with input from all Committees. The revision to our Personnel and selected other policies continues. Unfortunately, more urgent matters continually interrupted our efforts. Our commitment for this year is to get that work done and approved by Trustees.

We have attempted to assist staff with two challenges: CYM's historical practice of committees working in silos, and the tendency of Friends to forget that our staff carry a heavy burden on our behalf and their time and energy is precious. We see positive movement in both of those areas.

We feel confident that we have the best staff in place to carry CYM forward. The groundwork has been laid and with their help, we will be able to focus our energies on serving the members of the yearly meeting and managing our finances in a fiscally responsible way.

Approved: Personnel Committee Meeting April 4, 2023

Publications and Communications Committee - Annual Report

Committee Work for 2022 included:

- Publishing the e-newsletter monthly and working to grow its readership (currently at over 550 subscribers)
- Participating in the large number of additional online meetings (Representative Meetings, Meeting for Worship for Business sessions, etc.)
- Meeting every 4-8 weeks via videocall (Google Hangouts/Meet) to hold and continue our work together
- Supporting the CYM Editor to publish *The Canadian Friend* and manage the website, Quaker.ca. Clarifying website and *The Canadian Friend* submission guidelines.
- Working with the CYM Editor and IdeaZone to enhance website functionality, e.g. improving searchability.
- Securing an ongoing contract for web design and website security updates with IdeaZone, to improve the website's resilience.
- Supporting Canadian Quaker Learning Series (under the care of Winnipeg Monthly Meeting)
- Working with CYM General Secretary-Treasurer Tasmin Rajotte to improve supervision and invoicing procedures vis-a-vis contractors
- Participating in hiring and onboarding the new CYM Communications Coordinator, Holly Spencer (late 2022-early 2023). We are very excited to have Holly on board and expect that this will dramatically improve what we can report as successes in 2023.

Challenges in 2022

- Meeting the publishing expectation of three issues of *The Canadian Friend* per year -- which was not achieved in 2022
- One committee member was on leave from committee work for 4 months while volunteering for human rights work in Israel-Palestine. Other committee members had to fill the gap – difficult for an already under-staffed committee.
- Significant and still evolving changes in the CYM office staffing and anticipating changes to staff roles and their responsibilities around communication.
- As part of the transition to CYM having a much-needed part-time CYM Communications Coordinator staff position, we discerned that the Editor's contract would not be renewed. Moving forward, we are reevaluating the function/purpose of *The Canadian Friend* within CYM, in its print and electronic forms, as we consider the process of hiring a new editor. We anticipate issuing a Request for Proposals for the next Editor in summer 2023.

During 2022 we continued to use our report for Reporting and Clearness presented in June 2021 at an online CYM session, as our guide : <https://quaker.ca/business/cym-minutes/>. We both manage the work that MUST happen including contract oversight while being very aware that there remain significant gaps

in our ability to take on all the items that Friends have expressed as their communication wish list. We continue to hold a heavy concern for meeting Friends where they are in terms of communications media – recognizing both that the shift to more electronic communications risks leaving some Friends out of the loop, and that CYM continues to allocate limited resources to communications media. We hold considerable hope in the potential that the creation of a dedicated communication officer staff position may bring to this crucial challenge.

We continue to discern as a committee the best ways forward, while remaining aware of the reality of being a small committee.

We thank all the CYM clerks, staff, contractors, committees, and other volunteers who have graciously supported our work through another very busy year.

How you can help PubCom:

As an Individual

- Submit news, events, etc. to newsletter@quaker.ca by the 15th of each month.
- [Subscribe](https://quaker.ca/news-events/newsletter/) (<https://quaker.ca/news-events/newsletter/>) to the electronic newsletter and invite others in your local Meeting to do so as well.
- [Sign up to receive](#) *The Canadian Friend* and [submit](#) articles, reflections, art, and photos for upcoming issues. Please note there is an option to receive it electronically which is most cost effective.
- Be an ambassador for *The Canadian Friend* and ensure that new participants in your meeting are aware of how to subscribe.
- Explore the depth of information and resources available on Quaker.ca. These include:
 - Faith & Practice: <https://quaker.ca/cympublications/faith-and-practice/>
 - Organization & Procedure: <https://quaker.ca/cympublications/organization-and-procedure/>
 - Digital versions of *The Canadian Friend*: <https://quaker.ca/cympublications/tcf/> as well as the monthly e-newsletter.
 - Numerous CYM lectures and talks: <https://quaker.ca/resources/audio-and-video/> (click on the “+” symbols to expand the audio and video offerings)
 - Other educational resources: <https://quaker.ca/resources/education/>
- Consider covering the cost of a subscription to help us recoup the cost.
- Make sure your mailing address is up to date with the Yearly Meeting Office (email Eva at cym-office@quaker.ca)

As a Monthly Meeting or Yearly Meeting Committee

- Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups are reminded to send any updates to their Meeting times and locations to cym-communications@quaker.ca so that Quaker.ca listings

(<https://quaker.ca/contact/find-a-meeting/>) can successfully help Seekers and Friends new to your area find you

- CYM Committees are reminded that they are responsible for requesting updates to Quaker.ca content that is relevant to their work (Quaker.ca is large and PubCom cannot stay on top of all the changes across CYM which should be reflected on the website, although we do our best!)

Key Contact People

- cym-communications@quaker.ca (Holly Spencer) – contact re: general CYM communications issues
- pubcom-clerk@quaker.ca (Maggie Knight until the rise of CYM 2023, then Interim Clerk Bev Plett) - contact re: committee business
- Join us! We need new committee members! Inquiries about the work of the committee are welcome to pubcom-clerk@quaker.ca

In Friendship,

Maggie Knight (Vancouver Island MM), Clerk, on behalf of the Committee:

Robert (Asher) Kirchner (Edmonton MM), Rachel Urban Shipley (Ottawa MM), Ro Fife (Cowichan Valley MM), Bev Plett (Winnipeg MM), John Samson Fellows (ex officio, CQLS Clerk, Winnipeg MM)

Pickering Friends Cemetery - Annual Report

Greetings! I hope you are staying safe and enjoying springtime.

We are continuing to look after Pickering Friends Cemetery. There are some broken or toppled stones as well as some stones that need to be straightened. We will investigate having this work done.

I am not aware of any scatterings or burials in 2022. The grass was cut, and the cemetery was maintained in 2022. The cost of grass cutting in 2022 was about \$1700, like costs in the past. Kevin will continue to maintain the cemetery in 2023, as he has already submitted his invoice for this work.

Ebby Madera, Co-convenor

April 21, 2023

Reports from Other CYM Bodies

Change and Sustainable Transformation Working Group (CAST) - Annual Report

CAST has continued to look for ways to move Canadian Yearly Meeting towards a more sustainable, vibrant, and spiritually grounded community.

We meet online each month to further this work. In the Fall of 2022 Zaley Warkentin had to step back from the regular meetings. The active members of CAST are Celia Cheatley (Clerk), Pete Cross, Virginia Dawson, Marilyn Manzer, and Ruth Pincoe. We have been assisted in our work by Tasmin Rajotte, CYM General Secretary-Treasurer.

Over this year we have:

- brought forward a draft minute on CYM staffing structure and the role of CYM General Secretary-Treasurer. This minute was approved by Representative Meeting in May 2022 [RM 2022.5.10].
- conducted a “*Survey of Yearly Meeting Programs and Services*”, to which 185 Friends responded.
- proposed a 3-year plan for CYM-in-Session (Winnipeg 2023, Friends House & NeeKauNis 2024, Online 2025) which was approved at the CYM Business Meeting in June 2022 [CYM 2022.6.4].
- arranged for Jeff Dudiak to present a session during Yearly Meeting entitled “*Understanding Meeting for Worship for Business: Who Speaks, and Who Listens?*”.
- presented the following priorities to Yearly Meeting in August 2022 to guide CAST in its work: *Community, Learning, Sustainability, Youth*. These priorities were approved. [CYM 2022.8.12]
- met with Archives Committee and then assisted them with a proposal for multi-year funding from Samuel Rogers Memorial Trust.
- created a “CYM2024 Feasibility” group of Friends knowledgeable in Yearly Meeting, Friends House, and Camp NeeKauNis.
- created a group to plan the new “Community Gathering” to be held in-person each morning during Yearly Meeting in Winnipeg July 2023.
- held the “CAST Retreat” in-person at Friends House in Toronto March 31 – April 2, 2023. We invited the clerks of the CYM committees that offer programs to join us to explore how programs and services of CYM could be delivered more effectively and sustainably. We appreciated the facilitation provided by Barbara Horvath, and the willing spirit of all present to share and collaborate.

Celia Cheatley, Clerk CAST, April 2023

Canadian Yearly Meeting Statistical Secretary Report for the calendar year 2022

There are two additional reports with this Statistical Secretary report.

The first report is a detailed table showing the different categories that monthly meetings are asked to count. I am extremely grateful to all the statisticians in monthly meetings, many of whom have done this task faithfully for many years.

The attendance report, which gives the abbreviations for the different Monthly Meetings used in the first report, shows the average attendance over the year for each of the Meetings and their constituent Worship Groups, Midweek meetings, and discussion groups. More meetings are now holding worship in person, and many offer a blended option on Zoom.

It is always interesting to see the year end snapshot of CYM membership and attenders, when all the numbers submitted by Monthly Meetings are entered on the spreadsheet.

The total membership in 2022 was **959** down slightly from **968** in 2021. **398** of those are not active, and **32** are children, so the active adult membership is **529**.

Sadly **24** Friends died this year compared to 9 last year. However, we received **17** into membership by request and **7** transferred their memberships from another Meeting. We also welcomed **2** babies.

Joyfully marriages were celebrated in 4 meetings: Calgary, Coldstream, Kitchener Area, and Ottawa.

The number of active Attenders is **497**, slightly down from **531** last year. **40** of those Attenders are children. If we combine active adult Members, **529** and adult Attenders, **457** and the **57** who are sojourning Members in another Meeting – who could be counted twice! – we get **1043** as a snapshot of our CYM community. Including the children brings it up to **1115**.

Out of interest, I looked at the statistics from 10 years ago, as 2013 was the last year we had a printed copy of the CYM reports and minutes. The numbers for 2012 are slightly more in each category with a total of **1361** for the whole community of Canadian Friends, Members and Attenders. Thus we have diminished by **246** over the decade.

Looking at the age ranges we can see that the 60 + **Members** at **571** surpass the combined numbers for 19-59, which is **378**. However, looking at numbers for **Attenders** the combined number for 19-59 is **253**, slightly more than the 60 + number of **204**. It seems within our community of **Attenders** there is potential for the future, that is not present in the demographics for **Members**.

Do we need to be more intentional and vigorous in inviting our Attenders to consider membership, to ensure the survival of the Religious Society of Friends in Canada?

Virginia Dawson
Statistical Secretary
April 26, 2023

CYM STATISTICAL REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2022 – Main Summary

Full names of meetings are given in Attendance by Group Report. Columns include main body of meeting and groups under its care.

	Arg	AV	Cal	Col	Cow	Edm	Hal	Ham	KA**	IBC	Mon	NB	Ott	Pel	Pet	Sas	SJ	SP	TI	Tor	Van	VI	Win	Woo	Yar	YS	TOTAL
Membership Summary																											
Total December 31, 2021	30	15	34	31	18	16	46	41	42	25	23	33	133	9	10	13	0	16	25	110	72	78	18	5	78	39	960
Corrections (2020 report)								1			-2	3								-3					10		9
Additions:																											
Birth/adoption												1	1														2
Request			1		2			1		2	2	1		1				2		1		2	2				17
Transfer in			1		2							1						1			1	1					7
Losses:																											
Death	1			3			1	2				2	3					3			4	2				3	24
Resignation	5								1												1						7
Removal																											
Transfer out				1					1									1			2						5
TOTAL MEMBERS 2022	24	15	36	27	22	16	45	41	40	27	23	37	131	10	10	13	0	15	25	108	67	78	20	5	88	36	959
Membership Profile																											
Birth to 18 (Young Friends)			2		2			1	1	4		1	3							6		5			3	4	32
19--35 (Young Adult Friends)	4		2	1			1	4	19	2	1	3	15		1	3		1	9	7	4	12	2		19		110
36--59 (Adult Friends)	3	7	12		5	5	17	10	20	5	5	10	39	3		4		3	3	24	26	30	7	1	21	8	268
60 and over (Senior Friends)	17	8	20	30	15	11	27	26	20	16	17	23	74	7	9	6		11	13	71	39	31	7	4	45	24	571
Uninvolved (of above)	13	8	17	9	5	6	18	17	9	6	8	11	58	3	3	3	0	2	15	42	37	36	1	0	56	15	398
Members from other MMs	1	0	1	0	5	1	0	11	6	1	4	3	0	0	3	1	3	0	5	6	0	0	5	0	0	1	57
Attendees Profile																											
Birth to 18			2		4			5	4	2	4	3		2						6		1	2		2	3	40
19--35		0	3		1	1	4			2	13	4	4			3	1			25	3	6	2	2		1	75
36--59	0	3	4		3	1	5	9	25	8	6	8	18	7		1	4	3	6	34	3	9	12		2	7	178
60 and over	5	2	4	3	8		4	6		5	9	25	9	10	10	3	5	10	4	41	4	15	11		2	9	204
TOTAL ATTENDERS 2022	5	5	13	3	16	2	13	20	29	17	32	40	31	19	10	7	10	13	10	106	10	31	27	2	6	20	497
Total Involved in MMs	17	12	33	21	38	13	40	55	66	39	51	69	104	26	20	18	13	26	25	178	40	73	51	7	38	42	1115
Marriages	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

** Estimated age profiles

CYM STATISTICAL REPORT: CALENDAR YEAR 2022 - ATTENDANCE BY GROUP

	Monthly Meeting	Name	Type of Group	Avg. attendance		Frequency
				M for W	FDS	of meetings
Arg	<i>Argenta</i>	Argenta	Main Body	4		weekly
		Nelson	Worship Group			
AV	<i>Annapolis Valley</i>	Annapolis Valley	Main Body	8		weekly
Cal	<i>Calgary</i>	Calgary	Main Body	9		weekly
		Calgary	Wednesday grp	4		monthly
		Lethbridge	Worship Group			monthly
Col	<i>Coldstream</i>	Coldstream	Main Body	14		weekly
Cow	<i>Cowichan Valley</i>	Cowichan Valley	Main Body	20	4	weekly
		Gabriola Island	Worship Group	4		weekly
		Salt Spring Island	Worship Group	3		weekly
Edm	<i>Edmonton</i>	Edmonton	Main Body	7		weekly
Hal	<i>Halifax</i>	Halifax	Main Body	9		weekly
		Antigonish	Worship Group	4		bi-weekly
		South Shore	Worship Group	8		bi-weekly
		Truro	Worship Group	7		weekly
Ham	<i>Hamilton</i>	Hamilton	Main Body	22	3	weekly
		Cambridge	Worship Group			laid down
IBC	<i>Interior British Columbia</i>	Interior BC	Main Body	11		weekly
		Lillooet	Worship Group	2		weekly
		Kamloops	Worship Group	4		monthly
KA	<i>Kitchener Area</i>	Kitchener Area	Main Body	16		weekly
		Guelph	Worship Group			inactive
		Huron	Worship Group	10		twice a month
Mon	<i>Montreal</i>	Montreal	Main Body	13		weekly
		Quebec City	Worship Group	5		monthly
		Francophone Zoom	Discussion Group	9		monthly
		Mid-week	Worship Group	3		weekly
NB	<i>New Brunswick</i>	New Brunswick	Main Body	14		monthly
		Eastern Shore	Allowed Meeting			
		Fredericton	Worship Group	8		twice a month
		Fundy Friends	Worship Group	6		weekly

		Prince Edward Island	Allowed Meeting	5		weekly
		Sackville	Worship Group	4		weekly
		Saint John	Worship Group	7		2x monthly
		Woodstock-Houlton	Worship Group	7		2x monthly
Ott	<i>Ottawa</i>	Ottawa	Main Body	27		weekly
		St. Lawrence Valley	Allowed Meeting	7		weekly
Pel	<i>Pelham (Niagara Quakers)</i>	Pelham	Main Body	12		bi-weekly
Pet	<i>Peterborough</i>	Peterborough	Main Body	11		weekly
Sas	<i>Saskatoon</i>	Saskatoon	Main Body	7		2xweekly
SJ	<i>St. John's WG</i>	St. John's	Worship Group	6		bi-weekly
SP	<i>Saanich Peninsula</i>	Saanich Peninsula	Main Body	10		weekly
TI	<i>Thousand Islands</i>	Thousand Islands	Main Body	11		weekly
Tor	<i>Toronto</i>	Toronto	Main Body	28	6	weekly
		I-G Queer & Trans	Worship Gathering	7		weekly
		Mid week	Main Body	8		weekly
		West End	Worship Group	8		weekly
Van	<i>Vancouver</i>	Vancouver	Main Body	10		weekly
		Mid week	Main Body	4		weekly
		North Burnaby	Worship Group	14		monthly
		Fraser Valley	Worship Group			laid down
VI	<i>Vancouver Island</i>	Victoria Friends	Main Body	30	1	weekly
		Victoria (Wednesday)	Worship Group	7		weekly
		Mid-Island	Allowed Meeting			inactive
Win	<i>Winnipeg</i>	Winnipeg	Main Body	27	5	weekly
Woo	<i>Wooler</i>	Wooler	Main Body	3		twice a month
		Prince Edward County	Worship Group	5		weekly
Yar	<i>Yarmouth</i>	Yarmouth	Main Body	6	2	weekly
		Manitoulin Island	Worship Group			in abeyance
		Otterville	Worship Group	6		monthly
YS	<i>Yonge Street</i>	Yonge Street	Main Body	20		weekly
		Little Britain	Worship Group			in abeyance

Reports from CYM Representatives to Other Bodies

Canadian Council of Churches, Governing Board – Annual Report

I was privileged to attend the governing board meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches held in Quebec City at le Monastere des Augustine from May 23rd to May 26th. The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) is a broad and inclusive ecumenical body, now representing 26- member churches including: Quaker; Anglican; Eastern and Roman Catholic; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern and Oriental Orthodox; and Historic Protestant traditions. Together these member churches comprise 85% of the Christians in Canada. The Canadian Council of Churches was founded in 1944. Quakers have been a part of CCC since the beginning.

The Canadian Council of Churches continues to carry out a remarkable amount of good work in Canada in support of ecumenism and greater understanding amongst all religious organizations. It also acts as an interface between Christian churches and the secular general public. Over the years the number of Friends from CYM involved in the work of CCC has varied between 6 and 9 as members of commissions and working groups.

The mission of The Canadian Council of Churches is to respond to Christ's call for unity and peace, to seek Christ's truth with affection for diversity, and to act in love through prayer, dialogue, and witness to the gospel. The CCC has adopted a mantra: "Seeking CHRIST • COMMUNITY • COMPASSION Since 1944"

The CCC does its work through its Commissions, Working Groups and publications. It also arranges conferences and seminars on important religious, social justice and civil society issues. During COVID-19 most of these were held by Zoom. More recently 150 conference participants gathered in Waterloo for the keynote opening address by Green Party Leader MP Elizabeth May on the role of faith communities in finding common ground in a time of polarization.

Later this year (June 8-10, 2023, in Edmonton, AB) CCC will hold "A Gathering-Waiting Place: Voices of Indigenous Followers of Jesus in the Ecumenical Movement". The Council's Commission on Faith and Witness and its ecumenical partners, The Prairie Centre for Ecumenism and The Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, are the organizers.

During COVID-19 the Governing Board meetings which are held twice a year, were held by Zoom. This medium was a poor substitute for meaningful exchanges and interactions with delegates from other denominations, a necessary component to fulfill the object of the CCC in promoting ecumenism. I attended the May 2022 GB Meeting (Mississauga) by Zoom and Ruth Pincoe attended the first in person meeting in Ottawa in November 2022.

The May 2023 Governing Board meeting in Quebec City was the first Governing Board meeting that I attended in person, thanks to the support of CYM. Participating in the business meetings and sharing meals and conversation with the other delegates was a moving experience. Sessions were book-ended with prayers and benedictions. On the third evening Compline was celebrated, officiated by three Eastern Orthodox priests in the monastery choir.

Reports were received in a shared **Dropbox** from the following commissions and Working Groups

two weeks ahead of the conference. Governing Board members were required to have read and reviewed the reports in advance of the meeting.

- Communications Report
- Commission on Faith and Witness
- Commission on Justice and Peace
- Project Ploughshares Management Committee
- Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group
- Christian Interfaith Reference Group
- Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning
- Global Ecumenical Relations Report

One of the key objectives of the meeting in Quebec City was to explore the meaning of secularism, **laïcité** and pluralism, in Quebec in particular, and across Canada in general. The three-and-a-half-day conference included a panel discussion on secularism at the Anglican cathedral in Quebec City and a visit to the Sainte Foy Mosque, site of the 2017 massacre. We joined in an interfaith community conversation, to reflect with church leadership on walking together toward the future of the church in Quebec. Presentations on the development of religious observance in Quebec over the last few decades with particular focus on Bill 21 [the banning of religious symbols in public offices and related workplaces] were given by two professors of religious studies and a representative of the Quebec Provincial Government. There was an extended period of Q&A with many of the church representatives expressing discontent with this discriminatory law which disproportionately affects Muslims, Sikhs and Jews and in some cases prevents employees from attending workplaces such as schools, hospitals and government offices. This government Bill was seen by some of those present to arise from racism and in particular Islamophobia.

A Bible study session titled "Go with them without hesitation!" was on the passage from Acts of the Apostles, 10:1 to 11:18, in which Simon Peter is torn by God from his spiritual universe to enter the inconceivable newness wrought by the Holy Spirit.

The following notes were provided for guidance: "The Bible keeps track of great historical transitions that were interpreted as turning points in the history of relations between God and mankind. Each of these transitions involved a dark aspect—a break from what was familiar and often sacralized as such— and a luminous aspect—the fulfillment of a promise and the beginning of a new spiritual reality. Between the courageous faithfulness to traditions and a confident welcome of novelty, believers have always been torn between resistance and wonder. Enriched by the Biblical tradition and 2000 years of life in the multitude of human cultures, Christian churches are bearers of a message of openness and faith that is particularly enlightening at a time when Canada becomes increasingly multicultural. But are they not themselves confronted by the end of Christianity, affected by the rise of secularization and exposed to a pluralism that is a source of both richness and conflicts?"

Brief overview of Commissions and Working Groups sponsored or supported within CCC

The Commissions and Working Groups of the CCC are facilitated by hundreds of volunteers supported by CCC staff and affiliated and associated organizations. Quakers are well represented in the CCC. CYM Friends past and present serving on various commissions/WG's have made a considerable impact.

“The purposes and functions of the Council shall be to serve God's mission in the world, to give expression to the unity which is offered to the world through Jesus Christ, to witness to the continuing renewal of the Church by the Holy Spirit, to promote the growth of ecumenical and missionary obedience among all Christians, and to facilitate common action by the member churches.”

The Commission on Faith and Witness (CFW): engages churches in theological reflection to foster greater understanding of the faith we hold in common and to provide an ecumenical witness to Christ's mission in the world. The Commission provides a meeting place, a lively and fertile ground for reflection and work, among Christians of different families. Together, we think theologically about matters that concern CCC member churches.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an annual global ecumenical celebration (traditionally held January 18 – 25 in the northern hemisphere). Christians around the world are invited to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in jointly organized ecumenical services, and to share fellowship.

The Commission on Justice and Peace: is involved in Addressing such issues Poverty in Canada, Peace, Reconciliation, Climate Justice, Resource Allocation and Monitoring Other Issues

Sexual Exploitation Working Group : involved in addressing Gender-Based Violence, Racism and Poverty within Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation of Indigenous Women

This group makes this statement: Together, we are committed to understanding the nature of gender-based violence, casting a vision to restore mutuality between women and men. Prostitution and trafficking are a form of violence against women. The majority of those being sold are female and overwhelmingly the buyers are male. The act of renting a woman's body stands on the continuum of violence against women including domestic abuse and sexual assault. The Sexual Exploitation Working Group (SEWG) is committed to equity between women and men.

Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group (FLSRG): Current Program Priorities Synthetic Biology, Artificial intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, and Bioenhancement. Synthetic Biology involves issues of gene drives, military and health care applications, and ecological impacts. The use of synthetic biology raises moral, medical, legal, and social concerns about its applications in different fields. Most of us are learning a lot as we follow this issue. There are questions about who controls and benefits from these technologies that we think need to be addressed.

The Church is part of society – not separate from it – and we need to be aware of the events that affect society and the Earth, God's creation. Knowledge is a gift, so we have a responsibility to understand it as best we can. The Church can bring wisdom to the discussion on the impact that synthetic biology has on society and creation.

Christian Interfaith Reference Group: Established by The Canadian Council of Churches' Governing

Board in 2008, the Christian Interfaith Reference Group (CIRG) brings together CCC member churches to reflect ecumenically on issues of religious diversity and to encourage and resource ecumenical engagement with various religions, faiths, and spiritualities. Current Program Priorities: Encouraging meaningful Christian-Muslim relationships in Canada, Resourcing and supporting Christian-Jewish dialogue and relations in Canada, Interfaith learning and sharing.

Forum for Intercultural Leadership and Learning (FILL): Current Program Priorities: Training for Transformation, Gathering and Networking, Theology and Research, Collaboration across Institutions, Racial Justice. Working In locations across Canada we gather people to design, discern, train in, and experience transformational education, pedagogy, and facilitation. We offer intensive week-long programs, shorter workshops, tools and resources, webinars, and other experiences to resource intercultural ministry, ministry across diversity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and other ways to understand and address intersecting experiences of power, privilege, and resistance focusing on Canadian Church contexts.

Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network (CEARN): CEARN connects people across Canada working toward racial justice in churches and wider society. Regular emails connect this group to ecumenical resources [sign up link]. In 2018 CEARN designed and facilitated "Learning How to Animate Racial Justice Workshops". In this shared exploration led by the experienced workshop designers and facilitators of the CEARN steering committee participants experienced elements of successful workshops; received tips on design, process, and pitfalls; and had an opportunity to design their own workshop with others. Current Program Priorities: Resourcing a Cross-Canada Ecumenical Network, Published Resources, Support

Publications: Truth and Reconciliation and the Doctrine of Discovery, Cracking Open White Identity Towards Transformation, Mamow Be-Mo-Tay-Tah – Let us Walk Together

Project Ploughshares

Project Ploughshares takes its name and its vision from the ancient biblical vision in the Book of Isaiah in which the material and human wealth consumed by military preparations are transformed into resources for human development, thereby removing the roots of war itself. Originally founded in 1976, Ploughshares became a project of the Council a year later, in 1977, with the mandate to advance policies and actions that prevent war and armed violence and build sustainable peace. As a peace research institute of The Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares provides expertise and analysis to the Council and its members on peace and security issues and assists in shaping an ecumenical response to Current Program Priorities: Nuclear Weapons, Space Security, Emerging Technologies, Arms Trade Treaty. Our Objectives: Encourage vocal and active Canadian support for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Contribute, through work with likeminded organizations, in Canada and abroad, to international policies that support a more efficient and effective nuclear non-proliferation regime. those issues.

Submitted in thankfulness for the privilege of representing Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious of

Friends to the Governing Board of The Canadian Council of Churches.

Mel Earley June 4, 2023

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Section of the Americas) – Annual Report

While my role of representative includes being a conduit of information, **a better image for me is cheerleader.** I am excited about the work of [FWCC in the Americas](#), and it therefore comes easy to want to draw people in to participate. And to know that the vision and mission is broad and attractive enough that many Friends are engaged with the vision and mission without making an explicit connection.

We envision a thriving and integrated network of Friends woven together in transformative faith, learning to love, listen, and witness.

In the Americas, the [Quaker community extends from the Arctic to the Andes](#), spanning a rich diversity of regional cultures, beliefs and styles of worship.

Answering God's call to universal love, Friends World Committee for Consultation brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Perhaps FWCC's most visible initiative is **World Quaker Day** held each year the first Sunday in October. I was in touch to encourage meetings to celebrate and had some encouraging responses. Using Zoom, my meeting in Winnipeg worshiped with friends in Zealand. And while that took some planning, it was well worth it. The World Office provides both suggestions and connections to honour [World Quaker Day](#).

FWCC (SoA) held its [first-ever hybrid section meeting](#) from March 23 – 26, 2023. Over 100 Friends gathered in-person at Haw River State Park near Greensboro, NC and an equal number joined online. The theme was **Becoming the Quakers the World Needs**. I thank Canadian Yearly Meeting for its financial support that allowed me to attend in person. While there were many fascinating and engaging presentations, it is really the spirit of such an event that can be lasting. A Friend I have come to know through my volunteer time with FWCC offered his thoughts on the meeting with a poem.

Circle of Friends

by [Gil George](#)

*A circle of Friends, seated, staring
into new eyes, seeing hearts
reaching for understanding
of a different life, of unfamiliar
challenges and joys.*

*The Spirit of Love filling the room
as we extend shared joy
and sorrow, with compassion
visible in every glance.*

*The peace of the circle of Friends
is a reminder of what can be if
we listen well to the hearts*

behind the words.

For me, the most powerful moment was the **human visual aid during a presentation on the history of divisions among several Quaker Meetings in the Carolinas**. As a very capable historian explained both the unity in more distant history and the separations of Meetings that have happened more recently, five members of the Meetings that identify with different authorities sat beside each other stoically. The joy of being with one another and the pain of division were both palatable in the hour-long moment.



I have never understood the phrase "unity within disunity" as I did while listening to this presentation.

Expressing the invitation to joyfully accept our places in the covenant community, the concluding minute referenced Isaiah 6:8: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "**Here am I. Send me!**" If you want more details on the Section Meeting, such as the content of the plenary addresses and workshops, just ask me. Either at our Yearly Meeting in Session or by phone or email.

New to me and new to you are **three new initiatives** that I want you to hear about.

Quaker Connect is a pilot project designed to equip congregations to be more clearly who they are meant to be: Quakers, deeply rooted, and visible and relational in their local community. The hope and desire is that FWCC can impact local meetings and churches by creating online training tools and engaging Spirit-led coaches and apprentices. The program will structure [networks of mutual support across worship traditions, geography, age, and culture](#), to encourage participants to innovate in their own congregations and engage with others in their community.

FWCC is tending its nets, developing social infrastructure to carry our work forward by creating an [online interactive global directory](#) of Friends through their work with the census of religions. This is being paired with [increasing translation and interpretation support and services](#).

And what was known as the travelling ministries is being transported into new forms of visitation that bring together people across institutional, geographic and cultural barriers. To this end FWCC has formed a consultations program group, which was approved during the recent Section Meeting. [Consultations we have already offered](#) include hybrid worship, Spirit-led climate action and Missions. In terms of what

consultations well be held next, it is up to you and FWCC will be there to help bring them to life. I attended the consultation (via Zoom) on Spirit-led climate action and found it both deep and empowering.

I close my report by giving myself the privilege of the fabled **three wishes**.

The above programs all cost money and they are being funded with a Capital Campaign of 1.25 million dollars. The good news is that we have already raised over \$800,000.00. I will be contacting our Yearly Meeting and to each Monthly Meeting asking for consideration of a pledge by the meeting for a donation over the next five years. **My wish is for a generous response.**

Most yearly meetings have fewer Monthly Meetings and cover a smaller area than CYM, the latter being a phenomenal understatement. FWCC grants CYM up to four representatives and since my nomination I have been the only one. CYM names two representatives. **My wish is that we end our Meeting in Session with two representatives** rather than one.

Finally, The World Plenary will be in August 2024 and will be hybrid, with in-person events held in South Africa. The theme is ["Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with hope to God's call to cherish creation – and one another."](#) The hope of the FWCC world body is that each yearly meeting sends at least one representative. **My third wish is that we can send someone with time, energy and inclination** to not only travel and meet the busy schedule but to create opportunities to share that experience with Friends across our country.

Although it will happen between the submission of this report and when we meet in Winnipeg, I was thrilled to hear that the ever-engaging Gloria Thompson of New York Yearly Meeting has been invited to a **spring gathering in the Maritimes** to talk about FWCC!

I continue to look forward to reaching out to meetings to hear how they have managed to "listen in tongues" and "become the Quakers that the world needs" and to promote opportunities to do the same.

Glenn Morison (glenn@morison.ca, 204-298-7859)
member of Winnipeg Monthly Meeting



KAIROS Indigenous Rights Circle (KIRC) - Annual Report

I have been representing Friends on this circle since 2021. Since joining, KIRC has met five times. Current membership consists of eight Indigenous members and three non-indigenous, church representatives. Since its inception in 2001, the Indigenous Rights Circle has been a vehicle for research, education and advocacy for KAIROS and its member churches on Indigenous rights issues, as well as a catalyst for the decolonization and “Indigenization” of KAIROS. As per the Terms of Reference for Circle of Ecumenical Collaboration updated and approved by the KAIROS Steering Committee in 2017, specific functions of the Indigenous Rights Circle include enabling the direct, lived experience and wisdom of Indigenous peoples to inform the Indigenous Rights work and other priorities within KAIROS, developing measures to reflect nation-to-nation commitments in KAIROS, providing ecumenical space for solidarity and dialogue on broad issues related to KAIROS’ work with Indigenous peoples, and providing Indigenous insights and perspectives on right relations initiatives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dick Cotterill

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) - Annual Report

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a Quaker-led non-profit organization serving Friends in North America who strive to live in ecological integrity with the living world and in right relationship with each other.

We do this through:

- mutual support for the actions each of us takes in our own community and in our own lives;
- through educational and outreach programs;
- through direct action that QEW encourages and supports;
- through our publications and website,
- and as a public Quaker voice on Earthcare and Environmental Justice.

Our programs stem from a conviction and consciousness that the global crisis of ecological sustainability is a spiritual crisis. Without a profound transformation in our fundamental relationship with the rest of Creation, there is little chance of averting a major collapse of the systems that support all life on Earth.

There are 50+ volunteers serving on QEW's Steering Committee, which uses Quaker process and decision-making, and meets twice annually, recently on-line only.. The day-to-day work of the organization is done by two part-time staff and a bookkeeper.

Our broader network includes thousands of Friends and hundreds of Quaker meetings and Friends churches who read our newsletter, attend our events, share our educational resources with their communities, and connect together on social media. We also collaborate with Quaker partner organizations, the larger environmental justice movement, and faith-based networks.

We want to invite you all to join and support our network, as individuals and as individual meetings. We invite you to:

- visit our website (QuakerEarthcare.org) and check out our resources for individuals and meetings, including a wide range of downloadable pdf pamphlets and educational materials.
- Sign up for our quarterly newsletter, **BeFriending Creation**, on-line or in print for your Meeting.
- Join our online worship sharing and other online educational events
- Invite one of our speakers to come to your meeting, at this time virtually only for Canada
- Apply for a QEW mini-grant for a local environmental project
- Make a donation to support this work, tax-receiptable against US income.

As CYM representative to QEW for 5 years, I am seeking someone to take on this role in 2024. It has been very rewarding and though I have only been able to attend one in-person meeting (Pendle Hill in 2019), I have found great companionship among other members of Steering Committee and am happy now to share that source of strength. Please contact me if you have questions.

I ask Canadian Yearly Meeting to support QEW's work and that of KAIROS in a tangible manner. I suggest that CYM budget \$1500 in 2024 for KAIROS, acknowledging the three sectors to which CYM sends representatives, and \$500 for Quaker Earthcare witness (recognizing that this will be less in US funds). Representatives wanting to travel for meetings at this time, if unable to support travel through their own sources, could be encouraged to apply for funding through Education and Outreach. Those of us who do this important work of bringing CYM's voice to outside organizations need support. **At this time we need each other, and like-minded spiritual**

communities, more than ever to face the overwhelming realities of the climate crisis, and to act on these concerns with love and faith, and reverence.

Carol Bradley

Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting

April 2023

World Council of Churches - Annual Report

The major event for the World Council of Churches in the past year was the 11th Assembly, held in Karlsruhe, Germany, August 30 to September 8, 2022, under the theme of “Christ's love moves the world toward reconciliation and unity.” While there was a focus on internal theological/ecclesiastical unity, the greater emphasis of the Assembly was the unifying of the churches in the concern for reconciliation in areas that would resonate deeply with Canadian Friends: reconciliation with creation/environment; with sexual minorities; with indigenous peoples; with disabled people; among the races; and with religious (and not only theological) diversity. The World Council of Churches is not ignorant of the complexity of these issues and their interrelationships, and seeks ways to both effectively and sensitively respond to them. That is, while the WCC strives to address immediate crises (for example, the war in Ukraine was top of mind for many delegates and attendees), it also seeks to redress the deep and destructive structures from which they emerge. There was a powerful perception that the world is in a much deeper crisis now than it had been at the last assembly nine years ago in Busan. The assembly was, consequently, very much a call to the churches to action, a call vividly and persistently reinforced by the younger representatives to the assembly.

The Quaker representatives (delegates and advisors) from a number of countries were collectively disappointed that we will have no representatives on the next Central Committee 2022 to 2030 (down from 2 previously), and there will be only three members from amongst the historic peace churches on that important committee. But with 352 member churches, and only 150 seats on the Central Committee, there will always be some denominations left out. On this issue, the WCC is very attentive to naming members to the Central Committee and other important committees and commissions that take into account not only a diversity of theological positions, geographical areas and cultural perspectives, but also the inclusion of lay people, women, young people, indigenous peoples, disabled people, for which there are no official quotas, but towards which there are seriously taken aspirations. Therefore, the World Council of Churches encourages the churches to name representatives/delegates who might be nominated who would encourage this broad diversity of voices to be heard. While I am willing to continue on as CYM's representative to the World Council of Churches, should CYM decide to replace me with a someone who could contribute an other than older, white, male voice, I would support that. Such a person, moreover, would be more likely to be appointed to an influential committee. We can, however, continue to have our voice in the WCC by way of the Canadian Council of Churches and its operations. (Further on this matter, I know that CYM has other priorities, but if we care to be well-represented we need to be attentive to deadlines for nominations to the committees. The rules and practices of the WCC are complex, and I am only beginning to learn of them from more seasoned Quaker representatives to the Council.)

As the schedules and time pressures at the Assembly were tight, I found myself participating with the Quakers/peace churches sub-groups more often than with the Canadian contingent. The peace churches should be rightly proud of brokering an agreement (at the Central Committee meeting that preceded the Assembly) on a statement on the Ukrainian war that allowed the Russian delegates to sign on. And the Canadian member churches should likewise be proud of their participation in the Pilgrimages of Justice and Peace that WCC member churches conducted around the world, that here in North America focused on indigenous issues and on the Black Lives Matter movement. Indeed, the WCC continues to

exercise a non-coercive encouragement toward justice and peace through the love of Christ with churches around the globe. A most worthwhile project.

Jeffrey Dudiak

2022 State of Society Reports

from Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups, Allowed Meetings, and Half-Yearly Meetings within Canadian Yearly Meeting

Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting

We are a small Meeting that meets weekly for worship and for regular Meetings for Worship for Business. We held a special meeting to reflect on the life of our Meeting in preparation for this State of the Society report.

In 2022, we continued to meet for worship every Sunday despite the challenge posed by the continuing Covid pandemic to our capacity to keep connected with one another, while we also respected the varying comfort levels of individuals with the safety of face-to-face events. We had on-line meetings as well as a substantial number of in-person meetings that employed hybrid technology to include those not physically present. The hybrid technology has worked, although not always perfectly. We have greatly valued the renewed in-person experience and we also appreciate how inclusive online and hybrid formats have been. We are grateful that Zoom brings in regular attenders we just would not otherwise see, because they are in other locations across the Annapolis Valley. They, in turn, repeatedly have expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be present during worship. We have found that our adaptation to these challenging situations has been calm and has felt Spirit led.

Recently, our Meeting has negotiated a space to meet in the chapel on the campus of Acadia University, which we believe is a great location for potential growth of the Meeting. The room is quiet and light filled. We are working on adjusting our hybrid sound system to echoes created in the space.

Knowing that Meeting for Worship is a stable offering gives us a sense of security and peace, and connection to being a Quaker. We have tried a variety of ways of holding Meeting for Worship to see what formats meet the needs of our members and attenders. These have included the traditional unprogrammed meeting format of speaking as led out of silence, a modification of the traditional format with a reading as a prompt at the beginning of Meeting for Worship, and worship sharing based upon a theme suggested days in advance.

We have found that the Afterwords and Check-In following Meeting for Worship have deepened our connections with one another. The Check-In, which of course includes our on-line attenders, is more inclusive than the informal chit-chat we used to have after face-to-face meetings. We all hear each other, rather than interact in small groups having distinct conversations. This might become challenging if numbers grow, as it could take up a lot of time, but the intimacy of the gathering, and perhaps the worship experience itself, is enhanced by the opportunity for all to speak and be heard. Indeed, we have had new people coming, which adds diversity and larger attendance at Meetings.

For most of 2022, the role of Ministry and Counsel was taken on by the Clerk. This was a lot to ask of one person! We now have two new people serving as Ministry and Counsel to provide fresh energy and to respond to Meeting needs.

Members and attenders engaged in innovative and enriching activities over the past year. Some tried out Zoom midweek conversations on various topics. Some had an opportunity to play with each other at the “Nerdy Girls Farm” where they enjoyed a potluck and recreational events. Some have worked with the wider Quaker community in Atlantic Canada and locally with the Wolfville Area Inter-Church Council. Some accompanied Marilyn Manzer as the Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) Clerk visiting Quaker groups around the Atlantic Provinces, leading to rewarding connections. Four from our Meeting attended the wonderful “Getting to Know One Another” retreat in New Brunswick. Five have been participating in a Pink Dandelion online series.

Currently we have fewer strong connections with service to CYM. Some of us have felt that our heavy involvement in CYM diluted our capacity to engage the local Meeting. We still have good connection to CYM but perhaps now more proportional to our size and resources. We have more connections that are regional with Half-Yearly Meeting.

There is a yearning on the part of some for the Meeting to be engaged in a significant activity in the community (some kind of ongoing significant service) or among ourselves (e.g., hosting a retreat).

While we acknowledge the presence of some interpersonal conflicts that always pose challenges, our Meeting appears to be on an upward trend and we are optimistic that 2023 will find us growing in a variety of ways.

Argenta Monthly Meeting

We continued to feel the impact of the pandemic in 2022. A very small group of Friends, local to Argenta and area, continued to meet for Meeting for Worship whenever it was possible. Others from areas farther away met at the meeting house less frequently. We deeply value when any or all of us can worship together. The **Nelson Worship Group** was not able to meet at all. Holding our Meeting for Worship for Business online has worked well and helped to keep us connected.

In May, the Meeting held a 70th Anniversary Tea celebrating 70 years since the first Quakers arrived in Argenta. Don Pollard and David Stevenson shared memories and photos of their families' arrival and early days in Argenta. Judy Pollard, who was Judy MacArthur before marrying Ted Pollard, shared the story of her family welcoming the Stevensons and the Pollards to the area.

Then in June, the Meeting hosted an event for the whole Argenta community to celebrate the 70th Anniversary. As well as the stories and photos of those early days we showed the film *The Quiet Frontier* and had tea and goodies. Anni Valentine produced a timeline of when folks came to Argenta, from 1952 up into the 1970s when the Argenta Friends School was still in operation.

Argenta Monthly Meeting on Truth and Reconciliation: We met on Zoom to consider what reconciliation requires of us and our Meeting as Friends. We have discovered that it is a long and complicated conversation, and we will continue on the journey of learning more in respect of the First Nations People and what action we are led to take.

By Zoom we held a sharing session on the Query: How does Argenta Monthly Meeting contribute to your life? Some words, feelings, and thoughts shared: Belonging, compassion, continuity. Having roots to early members: "I grew up with them, with the Meeting."; "In the early days Meeting for worship had lots of wonderful ministry."; "Nostalgic for the past and the people."; "Helped me through dark night of the soul times"; "Safe place to personally worship. Quiet space, no distractions. Nurturing silence. Held safely and gently in a container of quiet community."

We were able to support several good causes with small financial contributions.

We are grateful for our small but faithful community, appreciating each person's gifts and contributions. We feel a connection to each other and to the Friends that came before us in Argenta who set such excellent examples of lives well lived.

Calgary Monthly Meeting

Calgary Quakers held a Worship Sharing on the State of Society, via Zoom, on February 26, 2023. This report is based on that Worship Sharing and other written and oral submissions.

Meetings for Worship continue to be central to the life of the Calgary Quaker community. Many Friends note the importance of virtual or in-person attendance for both community-building and spiritual growth. Meetings for Worship continue to be well attended compared to pre-pandemic numbers. Linking First Day worship to other activities like Quakers Talk Books, walks outside, and meals also seems to support attendance. In the third year of the pandemic our small community transitioned slowly from

holding most meetings online to having some in-person events with a monitor and Zoom. We began to alternate between two online Meetings for Worship per month and two blended. Meetings for Worship for Business, Quakers Talk Books, and our Retreat were held exclusively online. We had a few in-person events like fire-pit worship, walks, and socializing in various parks. Finally, in the fall we were able to have potlucks at a blended mountain Meeting for Worship and a blended Advent meeting, both at the homes of Friends. Meetings in person proved to be joyful reunions of both online Friends and Friends who we had not seen in a very long time.

We found transitioning to blended meetings more difficult than going to Zoom because of the challenges of technology and engaging two distinct sets of participants. However, we prioritized our efforts in this format to keep our community cohesive. We are painfully aware that some Friends choose not to participate in online activities, and we regret that the learning challenges to support blended meetings have slowed our efforts to offer more face-to-face activities as a Meeting. Families with young children stopped attending when we moved online. These losses are deeply felt. We have also been unable to revive two beloved activities: weekly worship sharing and the Outreach and Social Action Committee. Lethbridge Worship Group continues to meet with Calgary Meeting on Zoom.

Communication has been particularly problematic at numerous levels including emails from other Meetings, internal updates, website management, weekly announcements, and recording minutes. The Meeting is challenged to find new models for timely, efficient, and targeted communication. Changes in key participants and technology have increased the workload of some Friends.

On-line technology has enriched us by enabling us to join Quaker events sponsored by Canadian Yearly Meeting, Western Half-Yearly Meeting, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Pendle Hill, Woodbrooke Study Centre, Friends Association for Higher Education, Quaker Theological Discussion Group, Quaker Religious Education Collaborative, and Edmonton and Vancouver Monthly Meetings. We alert our members to the activities of other Quaker organization by highlighting them in our internal announcements and web page. Calgary Quakers are making friends and become formally involved in other Quaker networks. The Canadian Yearly Meeting website and access to CYM Meetings for Worship for Business and Representative Meetings as well as the addition of a January Meeting for Worship by Western Half Yearly Meeting have all helped to connect Calgary Friends with the broader Quaker community. We are grateful for the access to other organizations in educating newcomers and in enriching our local spiritual practice so that at the local level we can concentrate on community building and pastoral care.

Some Friends participate in Quakers Talk Books twice monthly, exploring how our testimonies are reflected in Quaker and a variety of other sources. Clearness Committees prove to be extremely rewarding to all concerned. They remind us that working in Quaker community our primary goal is to strengthen one another in our search for truth as individuals. This learning guides the way Friends participate in external groups with patience, gentleness and generosity. We strive to be nurturing and supportive as Friends deal with crises in their lives and as they participate individually in the world in activities related to social justice for Indigenous communities, refugees, and the environment. The Meeting participates in the work of the Indigenous Gathering Place Society of Calgary, and some friends have volunteered with the Calgary Bear Clan Patrol.

While we miss some Friends who have grown more distant, we derive great joy from new seekers and attenders who bring enthusiasm and light. In the words of one now regular attender who found us during the pandemic, *“The sense of community and mutual support are the two main reasons I attend. When I started attending last March [2022] it was out of curiosity. I kept coming back as the community of the Meeting felt as if they were holding me up even without ever meeting me in person. That community and the implied and overt support over the last year have kept the Friends close in terms of my thoughts and my heart.”*

Coldstream Monthly Meeting

Coldstream is a small community about 30 minutes away from London in Southwestern Ontario. We have a lovely Meeting House in a parklike setting. We continue to have a hybrid Meeting for Worship with about 8-10 meeting in person and about 6 persons attending on Zoom. Zoom has made a positive difference to the lives of our members. It has allowed us to use this technology for committee meetings, Book club and the Wednesday coffee session. It has also enabled Friends to attend either through distance or who have difficulties getting to the Meeting house. Its use during Meeting, however, is problematic for some. As a result, the first Sunday of the month has two separate Meetings- one in person and one online. We continue to struggle with its use although we embrace Friends who rely on this technology to attend Meeting. Our Meeting for Worship is followed by afterthought, sharing, announcements, and a discussion prompted by our Quintessential Quaker quotes (quotes chosen for a month by a Friend or attender). These often lead to discussion on spiritual and personal viewpoints. During Meeting for Worship, vocal Ministry, however, is limited. Our Meeting for Worship for Business is attended by 8-10 people.

Our Meeting has several events that help to build our relationships. Our annual Twelfth Night celebration of a potluck meal and entertainment provided by the attendees was enjoyed by many people that attended. We continue biweekly mid-morning virtual coffee time to catch up with each other socially. We also have a monthly Book Club supported by Friends. Our Annual Fall Picnic, and Coffee and Potluck Sundays have returned in person much to our delight. This year we celebrated a wedding. These activities have built our appreciation of each other.

On a broader scale a member and attender are deeply involved in Friendly Fridays on the teachings of George Fox and support for The Canadian Friends Historical Association. We appreciate the insights and experiences provided. We have a faithful representative to Representative Meeting and an active Canadian Friend Service Committee liaison person.

Members of the Meeting are engaged in social concerns with the support of the Meeting. The Interfaith Refugee Committee continues its work with a new family and the Meeting hosted a Welcome Tea to celebrate the newcomers that arrived during Covid. The Refugee work continues with additional applications underway. One of our members will resume her visits to Bududa, Uganda to assist a school and orphan program there, The Meeting has supplied funds to help with medical expenses for this project.

Our Meeting wrestled for several months with a request to assist a prisoner in making a transition to life outside of prison. We realized that with our distance from London and the ability of our members that we would not be able to provide the support that should be given.

Although our Meeting has an older demographic and is small, we still have a spiritual vitality, and a need to participate, and to grow.

Cowichan Valley Monthly Meeting

Reflecting upon the instructions for this year's report, we were struck by the similarities between the considerations listed and the Quaker Testimonies. Thus, we developed a list of queries for the Meeting using the Testimonies as our guide, and then compiled our responses via email and at a hybrid in-person/Zoom gathering. Many initiatives and activities were examples of more than one testimony in action, so this report compiles them as activities and then points to the relevant testimonies for each.

Our Meeting doesn't own property but rents a small, unostentatious space and there is no expectation that we arrive dressed in our "Sunday Best." Despite our small space, we make room for all who come, and some who can't. Hybrid meetings with Zoom have allowed us to worship with members over a wide geographical area that includes Salt Spring, Gabriola, and Mayne Islands. Some members live on Vancouver Island but not in the Cowichan Valley and are still able to worship with us, as are others who winter in warmer climes. We have a rotation for meeting in other locations – outside our valley, on one of the Gulf Islands, and in a care facility – so that farther-afield Friends don't feel cut off. Members of the **Salt Spring Island and Gabriola Island Worship Groups** are included in all our activities from worship to business to social gatherings. Good budgeting and accord with how we spend our available funds, including donating extra funds to organizations we agree upon are, in one Friend's words, "...some of the reasons why I particularly appreciate Quaker ways." Using Zoom decreases the amount Friends travel while allowing them to be involved and encourages a vision that involvement and belonging do not always require travel. For those Friends who come in person to Meeting, we feel blessed to be able to meet at Providence Farm with its connection to nature, inclusion, equality, and community. *Simplicity, Community, Integrity, Equality, Stewardship.*

Having a rotation of Clerks and other jobs means we don't get too attached to extra things or "positions." Except for the First Day School Committee, Cowichan Friends have opted for ad hoc committees. This has necessitated our taking on responsibilities collectively; for the most part this has been a great strength of this Meeting. There is not a sense of deferring to "Elders," or a sense that there are "weightier" Friends. We try to listen to and learn from each other, including from those who come to our Meeting from other Friends' experiences. That said, one concern is that it is difficult to keep several elderly or ill members involved since many of them find Zoom difficult. As we do not have a Ministry and Counsel, we do not have a place to "dump" that concern. We intend to have a series of discernment meetings in 2023 to explore how better to address pastoral care. A question was raised in our State of Society Report

meeting about whether we make it easy for new attenders to engage. Friends discussed how they approach our new attenders, and previous experiences of how being encouraged by a Friend made it easy for many to apply for membership. *Simplicity, Community, Equality, Stewardship.*

Our individual members work towards Peace in a variety of ways, yet still some struggle with the feeling that they are not doing enough. We wonder how we can get to peace without first focusing on justice. How can you have Peace in an unjust world? Members pray for Peace and contribute to organizations such as the Red Cross that help people affected by war. One member belongs to a country-wide group trying to get the Canadian government to send a group to monitor Israel's treatment of Palestinian children. Bringing these initiatives back to the Meeting both informs us and allows us to support Friends who are led to do more, whether with dollars or with other support. Another often attends Worship

Meeting with “Quakers of Kyiv” via Zoom and stays up to date with the work of the Mennonite Family Centre which provides support to vulnerable older adults living in need and requiring practical and social supports in Zaporizhzhie in Ukraine. Four members of our Meeting serve on the Canadian Friends Service Committee. *Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship.*

We have young Friends, and so in 2022 we started a First Day School which is so popular amongst us all, we have more adults involved than children. Not only does the FDS provide an introduction to Quaker Meeting for our young members, but it also allows those in a parenting role to worship without the stress of keeping their children quiet or entertained in a way so as not to disturb the rest of the Meeting. Seven adult members intentionally had criminal record checks done in order to be with the children on a monthly rotation and met on a regular basis to review the program. We’ve been flexible about what our intentions are with FDS and let the children guide much of our programming. They have clearly become much more comfortable being part of the community and even look forward to coming. They respond to the consistency of knowing they are accepted. At the beginning, the children were challenged by sitting quietly for five minutes; now they are quiet and still for ten to fifteen minutes. One adult Friend wrote, “Aside from my own children and grandchildren, I’ve not spent a lot of time with young kids... but I see the results in developing these relationships slowly.” *Integrity, Community, Equality.*

In 2022, we met as a group regularly outside of weekend and mid-week worship times. We held potluck meals in conjunction with our business meetings, had movie/discussion nights, and Zoom study sessions. We celebrated the marriage of one Friend and a milestone birthday of another. We welcomed new attenders, two transferred memberships, two new members, and the Gabriola Island Worship Group under our umbrella. Despite being small and spread out we work actively to welcome new members and demonstrate our commitment to “that of God in everyone.” And we’re truthful with one another, demonstrating a tie between Integrity and Community – we love and accept each other “warts and all.” *Integrity, Community, Equality.*

As a Meeting, we support a variety of organizations whose work is aligned with our values, including Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, the local food bank, and an organization that works to increase local food security, but we believe we could be more visible as a group. We recognize there are ways to be globally aware and locally active. One Cowichan Valley Quaker is involved in the Hul'q'umi'num' Sounds project, which is funded by a Canadian Friends Service Committee Reconciliation Fund grant. This Friend presents nature programs, nature walks, and workshops to children and adults on environmental topics, supporting environmental sustainability and reconciliation with local First Nations. We can notice, learn from and support examples of what individuals such as this Friend are doing, but we also need to be aware of and respect the energy and resources of our members. *Peace, Integrity, Equality, Community, Stewardship.*

The general feeling amongst our members is one of positivity. While we recognize that there is always room for improvement, we feel that as a Meeting and as individual Friends we are true to Quaker values and mindful of the testimonies. Friends feel that keeping our Meeting simple is an example to all of us of keeping our lives simple. All are buoyed by the fact that, for such a small organization, Canadian Friends work with many other groups to advance peace in the world. One member described integrity as “walking your talk,” and this past year has seen initiatives that show how we accomplish this. We

worship, play, and work together as a community while being open to expansion, we strive to treat and relate to each other equally, and we are intentional about our resources. 2022 has been a fruitful year for the Cowichan Valley Monthly Meeting, and we look forward to continuing this trend into 2023 and beyond.

Edmonton Monthly Meeting

This report was prepared with input from a worship sharing meeting, email responses to Continuing Meeting for Ministry and Counsel's call letter (from those who could not participate in the worship sharing,) and notes and recollection of our Meeting's events and activities in 2022.

There is much that is rich and positive in our Meeting. Although small, there is respect, concern, and caring among members and attenders. Several visitors found us during the past year and a few young adult newcomers join us regularly. Our meeting is a valued community for worship, social action and living in the light. In the shadow of the Covid pandemic we continued with a hybrid meeting to maintain access for those unable to attend in person. We made adjustments to audio capture (the microphone) at meeting to address a problem with the mixed format. We have a concern that our relatively small size (with 8 or 10 present on average) brings challenges too, as the duties and responsibilities essential to sustain our Meeting continue to overwhelm our limited capacity to fulfill them.

Our worship sharing Meeting brought out concerns as well as gratitude. Several people mentioned that our Meetings for Worship would benefit from more vocal ministry. We acknowledged that there is a reduced sense of a gathered meeting if the hour goes by in complete silence. We continued the practice of having a reflection read part way through each Meeting provided by volunteers who glean short readings from spiritual and Quaker texts. One member expressed disappointment at the relative lack of biblical readings. We also intermittently continued the practice of sharing joys and concerns in the last 10 minutes of Meeting.

Socializing and additional gatherings have not yet recovered from Covid distancing. In the early part of the year two members organized a Tuesday social; these gatherings were a source of comfort for some who were lonely or isolated and dealing with difficult situations. Although we all feel that retreats are an excellent way to bring us together, we were unable to develop and schedule one in 2022. Socializing with tea after meeting occurred on an irregular basis. Last summer we had a delightful potluck after one meeting, and from time to time there's an unscheduled post meeting chat. We also came together for some excellent presentations organised by the Education Committee: one on transformative justice, which attracted participants beyond our own meeting, one on the doctrine of discovery, and a third on Jung's thought and Quakerism. We also attended one of Asher (Robert)'s presentations about his trip to support Palestinian villagers (see below).

One significant event during the year was the production of the play based on the life of Gordon Hirabayashi, "Hold These Truths," by Jeanne Sakata. The play is based upon Gordon's memoir of the same name. Many readers will recognize Gordon's name as he was a long-time member of our meeting and Canadian Yearly Meeting and a famous resister to the Japanese Internment during World War II.

Our members individually have been active in the wider community. Some have actively participated in interfaith events. Others have been very involved in events and learning opportunities about indigenous concerns. Some of our members have been engaged with Yearly Meeting.

We are very proud of the participation by one of our members. Asher Kirchner was a member of a delegation of the Center for Jewish Nonviolence. His delegation resided for three months in the towns

of Umm al-Kheir, Tuwani and Susiya, and stood with Palestinians in the face of attacks by settlers and harassment by the Israeli army. Asher and his wife Suzanne prepared a video on their visit which they have presented to various groups.

We are grateful to Continuing Meeting for Ministry and Counsel for their call for a report. It engendered a rich opportunity to appreciate the strengths of our Meeting and to develop the commitment to address some of our deeper concerns.

Halifax Monthly Meeting

The State of Society report provides our Meeting with the opportunity to reflect upon our collective spiritual health and wellbeing. It is intended to be *"a searching self-examination by the Meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life."* (CYM, Organization and Procedure, 7.8)

The Halifax Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends has continued in 2022. The on-going impacts of the global pandemic continue to provide both challenges and opportunities for our Beloved Community. Meetings for Worship were held virtually and in hybrid format. This allowed F/friends to join our Meetings who might not be able to attend exclusively in-person gatherings. The hybrid Meetings were held in Friends homes and in the Halifax Public Gardens. The Meeting desires a long-term setting so that Friends and Seekers may have a consistent place to come, which will become known and be accessible to newcomers. We express gratitude to our Site Committee and in particular to Roger Davies for continuing to explore options for a more permanent home.

With the initiation and guidance of Bre Giffin, Halifax Monthly Meeting hosted a monthly SPICES book club. This was held virtually, had strong attendance, and provided an opportunity for Friends and Seekers to come together and discuss books from a Quaker perspective. The Meeting thanks Bre for her initiative which supported the spiritual health of individuals and the Meeting as a whole.

Halifax Monthly Meetings participated again this year in Interfaith Harmony Halifax, which has as its purpose to promote the vision of the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week (Feb 1-7), which is to spread harmony through promoting Love of God, the Good and Neighbour. Roger Davies and Maida Follini participated in a panel discussion with members of other faith groups. The theme was "Prayer, Meditation, Ritual".

Jessica Tellez and Helen Lofgren from Halifax Monthly Meeting and Mary Petrie of the Truro Worship Group were on the organizing committee for the Atlantic Friends Gathering which took place in May. The theme was "Envisioning the Future". Two younger Friends (Jordon Daniels and Saskia Blagaj-Berger) received funding for research projects under the mentorship of the Quaker Institute for the Future and presented at AFG. We are grateful for the opportunity to come together that the AFG provides to Quakers in the Atlantic Region.

We express gratitude to Mel Earley for continuing to act as our delegate to Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM). Thank you also to Maida Follini, who attended this year's annual CYM held in August.

Also in August, Ministry and Counsel sponsored a workshop called "Moving Beyond the Binary" to promote greater inclusiveness of the gender non-binary. This virtual workshop was facilitated by the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia.

Halifax Monthly Meeting supported the nomination of Jocelyne Tranquilla to the Quakers Fostering Justice committee of the Canadian Friends Service Committee. Jocelyne was able to attend the Canadian Friends Service Committee's gathering that took place at Camp NeeKauNis in October.

In November we welcomed CYM Clerk, Marilyn Manzer, who spoke to us about the work of CYM and solicited our feedback.

In December we held a Christmas Potluck at Kenna Manos' home, hosted by Christina Tellez. This "Meeting for Eating" provided an opportunity for us to enjoy one another's company.

Halifax Monthly Meeting aspires to take a global view of peace and social justice. Our Meeting endorsed a letter written by Sara avMaat to Prime Minister Trudeau regarding the destruction of Palestinian villages. Jocelyne Tranquilla raised funds for the Rwandan Children's Peace Libraries (CPL). The CPL is a project of the Friends Peace Team and the Transformational Leadership Center in Rwanda. The opening of the Bigogwe branch of the Children's Peace Libraries was made possible because of funding that came primarily from Friends in Halifax Monthly Meeting. The Peace and Social Action committee requested that Hamilton Monthly Meeting sponsor two brothers from Uganda, who wish to join their brother Michael, already settled in Nova Scotia. Hamilton Monthly Meeting approved of this sponsorship through the Atlantic Baptist Association, which is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder in Nova Scotia. Our Meeting would satisfy the requirement that sponsors have a religious connection.

Dorchester Prison Work - There are at least two people from Hamilton Monthly Meeting who are facilitators with Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), conducting workshops at Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick. For the first time in 3 years, we have finally been able to return to the prison after the Covid lockdown. We have a couple of others in Hamilton Monthly Meeting who are interested in taking the program. It is a lengthy story regarding the challenges of dealing with the Correctional Service bureaucracy; suffice to say that we have had our challenges. The redeeming part is actually working with the inmates, and it was great to be able to be with them for two workshops this past fall. We hope to do another workshop in February 2023. We hold Sharon MacDonald in the Light as she continues steadfastly in the role of supporting this work.

We are appreciative to our Recording Clerk, Mieke Eales whose service is so important to our Meeting. Lucky Howard stepped down as Clerk and Erik Königer assumed that role. Many thanks to both Friends. Thank you also to Christina Tellez for her work to ensure communication is circulated amongst Friends.

We thank Roger Davies for his continued efforts as our Treasurer. Roger asks that Halifax Monthly Meeting consider the need for a succession plan for the financial wellbeing of our Meeting.

We acknowledge Sue Adams' contribution to the Meeting, as she has worked diligently to scan our documents so that we have an electronic record of our Archives.

2022 Membership Updates:

We note the death of long-time member of this Meeting Lee Webb on August 3, 2022.

-Respectfully submitted by Jocelyne Tranquilla with guidance from Ministry & Counsel

Truro Worship Group (of Halifax Monthly Meeting)

Meetings for Worship: Our worship group meets most Sundays at 2 pm except for the last Sunday of the month when we meet at 10:30 am. There is an average attendance of five people since we welcomed another regular attender. On occasion, we are joined by Friends from elsewhere in the region (see below). Following Meeting for Worship, we enjoy a social time when we are sometimes joined by “our landlord,” Dorien Freve, who has provided the building that has become our Meeting House. He is an enthusiastic supporter who has a long history of association with Canadian and American Friends.

Meeting House: We continue to enjoy our rustic Meeting House, as we have since April 2021. The many windows provide daylight and ventilation which have been vital to our health and comfort, particularly during the pandemic. The wood stove warms us during the colder seasons. In late summer, we enjoyed meeting outside on the lawn. We continue to enhance the building’s accessibility and comfort. Members have contributed Quaker-themed artwork and needlework which we have mounted, and items of furniture and household supplies have been donated.

Finances: This year we established a small cash fund, maintained by members’ donations to allow for minor purchases and contributions to groups and initiatives which we support. We purchased a shelf to accommodate our Quaker library. Some books were sent to us by Halifax Monthly Meeting, and some were contributed by our members.

Spiritual growth: We support our spiritual growth in a variety of ways. As members, we befriend and support each other beyond our weekly Meetings. This strengthens and deepens our friendships and sense of identity as a worship group. We collaborate in taking care of the buildings and the grounds. This year, we built a flower box and garden with perennial pollinator-friendly flowers to enhance our connection to the environment. In October, Hurricane Fiona damaged many of the trees around our Meeting House. Several large ones were toppled but fortunately both the Meeting House and our little annex (housing our composting toilet and handwashing station) were spared. We look forward to nature rejuvenating the ever-changing forest. We have cleared away some of the tree debris and will allow nature to gradually reclaim the rest.

All members take responsibility for the spiritual depth of the Meeting. At the start of each Meeting for Worship, any member may share a brief passage from literature or a piece of music. Our silence is deep, often only broken by bird song or the breeze, and vocal ministry is offered when felt.

We continue efforts to increase membership. An article in “Saltwire” in March 2021 was very positive and enthusiastically received. It attracted a new attender!

Visitors: We were privileged to host Marilyn Manzer, Clerk of Canadian Yearly Meeting, and Carolyn Bradley as part of Marilyn’s initiative to visit CYM meetings and worship groups. She described recent

developments in the life and direction of CYM and sought our input. Sara avMaat of the Antigonish Worship Group joined us on one occasion, as did one or two attenders from the local area and Halifax-Dartmouth. We hosted the Atlantic Friends Gathering planning committee again this year at a regular Meeting for Worship. We enjoyed Meeting and social time outdoors on a beautiful August afternoon.

External activities: Dick and Mary continue to participate in the Cobequid Interfaith Council whose members meet monthly to share information and insights about the spiritual beliefs and activities of the various faith groups: Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Baha'i as well as Quaker. Members continue to be active on other Quaker committees.

The year 2022 has been very positive, with strong growth in our relationships as a worship group and as F/friends.

-This report was prepared collaboratively with our members, with Mary Petrie and Katherine Reed leading.

Antigonish Worship Group (of Halifax Monthly Meeting)

January 22, 2023: Meeting for Worship was followed by sharing our experiences in fostering spiritual growth, both personal and as a Quaker group, which has not been able to hold regular Meetings over the past year.

We noticed phrases we each used to describe some aspect of the nurturing nature of gathering for Meeting. Although we are not all present at each Meeting, we seek the experience of silent worship through the past year, grateful when we are together. We look forward to the return to our bi-monthly Meeting for Worship. One attender finds it harder and harder to be positive about where we are, as the needs of nature seem so easily done by. Even in the fourteen years she's lived on a lakeside, she sees violence to nature; nothing connecting new owners to nature.

One attender spoke of her feelings of a kind of spiritual emptiness when not being able to attend regularly. When able to attend Meeting, another person finds a 'pool of peace', which is terribly valuable in making her feel less vulnerable against the careless violence of society. Being in Meeting is a time spent in 'sacred space', where it is safe to touch on these things, for which she is incredibly grateful. Another attender noticed that in Meeting she feels surrounded by a 'circle of aunties', most of us being much older, at a time when she feels so far from her family in Manitoba, and that there is a blessing in that. Gratitude and care are part of being here. Other attendees said that reading the reports of Halifax and Truro Meetings, and The Canadian Friend, brought to mind the many ways Quakers share their spiritual experiences in print form. One Friend shared her experience of using art as a creative expression of spirit, and that it was valuable during the Covid restrictions and isolation. One attender shared that the last two years have been a difficult time of loss. One person has felt an internal struggle of coming back to Meeting with summertime spent outside being spiritual in nature.

Outside of Sunday Meeting for Worship, we have each participated in opportunities for speaking and witnessing our concerns about the environmental degradation of our Earth Mother, the need for adequate food and shelter in our province, and the needs of the elderly. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is another concern. They include:

- Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty, The Fuel Fund, Fridays for the Future rallies, on Main Street outside the Municipal building, and at the Farmer's Market.
- Sara worked on her first published comic, *Hope Unleashed, a Climate Action Comic*.
- Participating in Water Walking ceremonies with the Mi'kmaw,
- Zoom meetings with Quaker Friends in Kiev at the start of the Russian invasion last year,
- Presenting at a St. F. X panel on the Russian Ukraine conflict, and on the place of peace movements during war times, by mothers of soldiers.

We have been allowed to meet at one of the L'Arche houses in Antigonish, wearing masks for most of the past year. Many thanks.

South Shore Worship Group (of Halifax Monthly Meeting)

During 2022, the South Shore Worship Group gathered in person for our Meetings in the Mahone Bay Centre, a community building which offers us good accessible spaces both for silent worship and for social time in its large, well-equipped kitchen/dining space. We find this permanent move to the Marhone Bay Centre very satisfactory for our group's needs: we can meet and social distance in large, barrier-free spaces and enjoy our tea, coffee, snacks or lunch in the always-open Community Kitchen.

During November and December the group decided to add a large sign to the permanent signs on the Centre's exterior at the main door. In a group process we identified what characteristics we thought the sign should have to meet our needs and to be in sympathy with the other signage indicating organizations which also meet there. The sign is now on the building.

We continue to meet every second Sunday, each of us donating \$5.00 for spaces we rent for Meetings and discussion over the noon hour. Sharon Driscoll meets monthly with the manager to pay the rent. Sometimes we have a surplus which Sharon puts aside until the sum totals \$100, at which point the South Shore Worship Group donates it to a local Food Bank. In 2022 we donated to the Mahone Bay Food Bank and the Bridgewater Inter-church Food Banks.

We have former members returning home after working outside the province for several years. We also have new participants attending who have moved to the province or from another area in Nova Scotia. Generally we have between 8 and 12 people attending on Sundays. Covid continues to impose limitations on our social gatherings after Meetings, with participants bringing snacks or lunches prepared at home. We still have members who are nervous about eating shared food.

We do share our notices of Meeting and material from provincial and national Quaker organizations with former group members who have moved away or who now live in seniors' homes. We still hear from them as they take an interest in the group and enjoy their connection with us. In the group, we try to support each other in our day-to-day lives by keeping in touch by phone and in person, visiting and supporting those in hospital, as well as visiting and making meals for those who are unwell at home. Some members are active in local, provincial and national issues and continue to work in areas of peace, social justice, human rights, as well as local and global climate change issues.

A heart-felt thank you to Halifax Monthly Meeting for their leadership and inspiration to us.

- In Friendship, Beth Munroe & Peggie Graham, South Shore Worship Group

Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Worship in Meetings for Worship is central for Hamilton Friends. Hamilton Meeting was affected by Covid-19 restrictions through 2022. January 2022 was the peak of the Omicron outbreak, and meetings were online. In April, we had our first outdoor meeting, and in May, the first indoor and the beginning of hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings were challenging due to technological adjustments throughout the summer and fall.

Our total attendance was close to pre-covid numbers. The main loss was the lack of informal gatherings after Meeting for Worship, where people sought each other out regarding Quaker business and to catch up on each other's lives. The lack of socializing made it difficult to reach out informally to newcomers. For some, Meeting for Worship online was surprisingly robust and connected, and allowed some friends limited by geography or disability to attend. For others, it felt dry and disconnected. Some Friends preferred to worship at home without Zoom

technology. We had some Meetings for Worship that were completely silent. Some Friends shared their witness simply by being present. There were others who offered vocal ministry based on scripture, inspired by observation or encounter, recalling some inspirational anecdote, or sharing a reflection illustrating one of the traditional Testimonies. There were some who found Afterword particularly rich. There were Friends who led by example. There were others whose presence and ministry were appreciated for their sincerity, willingness to listen, and ability to reflect on the ministry previously offered. Despite the unusual circumstances, Hamilton Friends experienced worship in spirit and in truth.

The reading group met monthly to discuss *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, which dovetailed well with the Meeting's focus on the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations and the climate emergency.

The First Day School met sporadically in 2022, hindered by the pandemic and Zoom fatigue. There were two all-ages First Day School hikes which had good participation by families.

Hamilton Friends finally celebrated the life of a much-loved friend who died in 2020. We also welcomed into membership a beloved long-time attender with sharing of food together for the first time since the beginning of Covid. In the winter, several friends took part in two of a series of four workshops (to be concluded in 2023) on the topic of Quaker renewal led by Ben Pink Dandelion via Zoom from Woodbrooke Study Centre, a Quaker College, in Selly Oak, Birmingham, England.

The Peace and Social Action Committee was active throughout 2022. The Peace Testimony in relation to the Russia/Ukraine conflict was considered. A letter was sent from the Clerk of Hamilton Monthly Meeting to the Minister of Foreign Affairs urging the Federal Government to resolve the conflict peacefully. There was a presentation to Hamilton Meeting's attenders on the Peace Testimony in the spring, followed by another presentation in the fall. Highlighted was the fact that Canada has not ratified the *UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. The Clerk of Hamilton Meeting contacted the Canadian Friends Service Committee and Canadian Yearly Meeting to encourage overtures by the Canadian Government to ratify the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Individuals were encouraged to join the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

The Testimony on Stewardship Care for the Earth and Its Inhabitants included hosting an online presentation on how the use of fossil fuels has contributed to adverse climate change. A “Vote for the Environment” lawn sign initiative was accomplished. A “Stop the Sprawl” initiative was referred to the Halton Regional Council. Friends, as individual citizens, were asked to send letters opposing Bill 23, a piece of legislation that would allow the use of the Greenbelt and other rural lands for housing. Several Friends met with Hamilton councillors to ask for their help in following up on the city's resolve to act against Bill 23 in light of the climate change emergency.

The challenges and joys of Hamilton Monthly Meeting were met with alacrity. Members recognized their need to harbour the limited resources of time, treasure, and people, and focus their attention on what could be done. Meetings for Worship continued uninterrupted, membership was sustained, and peace, justice, and social concerns were addressed.

- Hamilton Friends

Interior British Columbia Monthly Meeting

Interior BC Monthly Meeting (IBCMM) is much loved by faithful Friends and attenders. Our small but dedicated Meeting continues to embrace the challenges of building community across a huge geographical area. IBCMM managed to weather geographic and pandemic-related challenges rather well in 2022. The Meeting has expanded its activities in both virtual and in-person spaces, and has welcomed new inquirers, attenders and members.

Currently, IBCMM's catchment area is almost 50,000 square kilometres: it is 709 km by road from Prince George in the north to Keremeos in the south, and 278 km by road from Lillooet in the west to Salmon Arm in the east. The Meeting also has a member living in Ontario, one in Australia, and a regular attender who lives in Los Angeles, California.

Interior BC MM currently has two Worship Groups under its care: Kamloops Worship Group and Lillooet Worship Group. Kamloops Worship Group is comprised of about a half dozen members and attenders who began meeting regularly in 2018 in the homes of its members. After the pandemic, it resumed monthly in-person Meeting for Worship, which has been a source of spiritual nurture and community for those who attend. Lillooet Worship Group is presently comprised of two Friends in the same household, who, because of the possibility of meeting virtually, meet weekly with the Meeting online. The Worship Group continues to exist so that visiting Friends and inquirers have a possibility to meet face-to-face in Lillooet, should occasion arise.

Throughout 2022, IBCMM met weekly on Zoom for Meeting for Worship, with attendance ranging from 6 to 17 people. A hybrid Meeting for Worship was held each second Sunday of the month in Kelowna. However, while many Friends have valued the opportunity to connect far-flung members in a hybrid format, the experience of the hybrid meeting has not been the same for everyone, and technological issues have proven to be very challenging. In addition to weekly Meetings for Worship, the Meeting held monthly Worship Sharing evenings online, which have consistently drawn 6 to 10 attendees for an hour of Spirit-led listening and sharing. The Meeting continues to maintain a parents' group that meets biweekly online. This has become a valued community of support for the parents who attend. As well, online retreat sessions were held over the winter and spring months to complete *“Open for Transformation: Being Quaker”* activities provided in 2014 Swarthmore Lecture of Ben Pink Dandelion. Individual offerings of Friends have included a monthly virtual “Quaker Movie Night” and a virtual Christmas potluck and fun evening. And finally, in the past year the Meeting also initiated a well-attended “Get to Know Thee, Friend” series of presentations, where members and attenders have shared their spiritual journeys and lives with the wider membership.

Interior BC Monthly Meeting reaches out to the wider community through its website and Facebook page. Within the Meeting, our monthly newsletter keeps us informed about upcoming activities, and always includes links to opportunities for further education, as do our website and Facebook page. While we did not undertake any service or outreach projects as a Meeting in 2022, many of our members are active in their local communities in a variety of peace, social action and environmental concerns.

Some Friends and attenders have availed themselves of worship and study opportunities within wider Friends' networks. Several have attended online courses offered through Canadian Yearly Meeting.

Some have attended other monthly meetings online, and some have attended the weekly Meeting for Worship of Canadian Friends Service Committee. Some are engaged in service work within Western Half Yearly Meeting, CYM or CFSC. Some have attended spring and/or fall WHYM, either virtually or in person, and CYM gatherings, virtually, as well. These Friends have greatly enriched the life of our Meeting by sharing news and insights from their experiences in the wider Quaker community.

We have a sense that the expansion of our online and in-person activities has resulted in greater vitality in the Meeting. While Friends and attenders deeply miss the social aspects of meeting face-to-face, we have been blessed that the online option is available to us, as it has permitted us to gather regularly in community across the great distances of our Meeting. Some new attenders and members have been able to join us because it has been possible to do so virtually. We have witnessed a welcome increase in and depth of vocal ministry and in the sharing that happens after our Meetings for Worship. We are very grateful for the individual and collective efforts of a faithful core of Friends and attenders who have been tending to Quaker discipline and discernment in our online Meetings for Worship for Business in the past year.

At the same time, we are keenly aware of the challenges we face as a Meeting. It is often difficult to provide adequate pastoral care to those who need face-to-face support, given the physical distances between us. We are also challenged in our efforts to help newcomers learn about Quaker practices and spirituality. While new members and attenders are referred to Quaker materials, they are often not discussed and it is not known who actually has read them. We recognize that the best way to teach Quaker ways is through example and personal relationships with other Friends, and that this is more difficult in the absence of regular face-to-face gatherings. We continue to seek ways forward in this area.

We continue to seek ways to support and welcome families and young people in our midst. Online Meetings for Worship do not appear to meet the social and spiritual needs of young people, nor their parents' needs for the childcare support that would allow them to participate more fully in the life of the Meeting. It is even difficult to support those families who live close enough to attend one of the monthly face-to-face Meetings for Worship; given that the families with children are widely dispersed geographically, each in-person Meeting for Worship or Worship Group has only one or two families in proximity, thus there are few or no peer relationships to help attract the young people to become engaged. A few parents choose to be active in online and in-person gatherings without their children, and in doing so face particular challenges in negotiating the multiple needs of their households. Understandably, given these limitations, most families with children usually choose to spend their weekend hours in face-to-face family and community activities, rather than spending time with Friends.

Our use of the online platform, while enabling much Spirit-led growth in our community, has also resulted in some difficulties. Some among us find that virtual meetings are incompatible with their spiritual needs, and so decline to participate this way. For others the monthly face-to-face Meetings for Worship are the only viable opportunity to gather in the manner of Friends. In addition, our low collective tolerance for lengthy online meetings has meant that it has sometimes been difficult to achieve the centring into worship required for deep listening and Spirit-led discernment in our online Meetings for Worship for Business. Our awareness of these concerns, however, has also grown in the past year. We

are continually seeking ways to meet the diverse needs of our membership and to be faithful to Friends' practices in the virtual context.

We celebrate the ways in which Interior BC Monthly Meeting has been growing and building community in the past year. We are not without tension, but we have a will to grow together in loving community, seeking to nurture the life of the Spirit amongst us. While the physical distances between us present many challenges, our love for this community continues to inspire us to be creative in the practice of our Quaker spirituality.

Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting

The 2022-2023 State of Society Report of Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting (KAMM) is based on the observations and insights of those Members and Attenders of KAMM that chose to provide feedback following an invitation to share that was issued by Ministry and Counsel via KAMM's listserv, and during in-person/online hybrid Meetings for Worship.

The spiritual health of KAMM continued to evolve positively as different challenges arose that touched either individual Members, Attenders, the Meeting as a whole community, and or the larger human and ecological communities that we are a part of.

Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting welcomed a diverse range of serious Inquirers, Attenders, and Members, both in-person, during Meetings for Worship at the Meeting House, and online, during hybrid Meetings for Worship, or Worship Sharing. Hybrid Meetings for Worship have occurred on the second, fourth and fifth Sundays of each month; online-only Meetings for Worship have occurred on the first and third Sundays of each month. This balance of modes was arrived at as a community through careful collaboration and deliberation. Notable points for Meeting consideration included individuals' gathering tolerances; internet service, hardware and software to facilitate hybrid Worship; and Meeting House ventilation. The modes of Worship and gathering have encouraged, or discouraged, some Friends' and Attenders' participation in the Meeting. We have sought to find a way to harmoniously co-exist and collaborate while trying to respect the diverse needs, obligations and preferences of each person involved in the Meeting who, like everyone, is living in the ongoing aftermath of a global pandemic that was declared in March 2020.

Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting Friends have shared wisdom and supported each other while acknowledging that certain individuals' responsibilities within the Meeting were significant and at times burdensome. We contemplated the sustainability and configuration of how we assign and carry out our formal duties in the future. For example, the then Clerk was ready to pass on the role and its responsibilities to a new Clerk; however, no Member came forward to take on the role for some time. Friends in KAMM remained in dialogue and open to listening to one another, and for this we are grateful. Ministry and Counsel continued to maintain a Care of Friends list and hold Friends and Attenders in the Light. Friends greatly enjoyed having the opportunity to sing in person with each other before Meetings for Worship after long stretches of online singing. Friends have appreciated the loving care they have received from the KAMM community. Friends have met one on one for company and spiritual dialogue; they have taken walks together; they have eaten together; they have participated in mid-week Worship in Friends' backyards or the Meeting House; they have attempted to make space for children and families to connect to each other and the Meeting; they have exchanged caring emails, phone-calls and cards. At the same time, some KAMM Friends have struggled to feel secure about their place in the community; sometimes this was because of geographic distance between Friends' homes and the Meeting House; sometimes Friends were not sure how to participate with conviction and confidence in processes that were not appealing to them due to online participation fatigue; internet-induced isolation; or the difficulty to develop or maintain empathic connections.

Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting tried to remain connected with its neighborhood. KAMM's Little Library remained open for freely receiving and sharing books. KAMM affirmed the leading of certain Friends by

trying to strengthen our relationship with our next-door neighbour, The Healing of the Seven Generations (HSG). HSG was asked at different moments how best KAMM could support them, and KAMM responded accordingly, one example being the display of an Every Child Matters orange solidarity flag on the Meeting House porch following acts of aggression that were made to the premises of HSG and its cultural values.

Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting Friends have also tried to directly address the problems of climate change and live caringly with Creation. Some Friends have represented KAMM as participants in the network Faith and Climate Justice Waterloo Region (FCJ). Members of KAMM also began to conduct energy evaluations of the Meeting House with the goal of finding a way for the Meeting House to no longer be dependent on fossil fuel.

Overall, the spiritual body of Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting has been healthy and able to function well. Vital parts of the body, even if tired at times, have worked well together, and Friends have remained open to learning from one another through successes and challenges as we change and grow as a loving community.

Huron Quaker Worship Group (of Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting)

Meeting for Worship continues to be a place where we can speak our truths, and listen deeply for the moving of the Spirit. We continue to begin our meetings with singing, which has always been an integral part of our meetings since its beginning more than 30 years ago. As one of our often-sung songs says, "We come together to make sense of what we find [in our world]." We have returned fully to in-person meetings in the past year, and try to be sensitive to the needs of others when it comes to wearing masks and sharing food together.

Looking outward was a focus of the Huron Worship Group in 2022. A small part of this was the change of name from "Lucknow & Area WG" to the more inclusive "Huron Quakers." We have had an ongoing discussion in the past year over ways to be more visible. Various possibilities have been considered: t-shirts or ball caps with a Quaker slogan, entries in local phone books, occasional ads in weekly newspapers, and more of an online presence. We plan to try meeting in a more public space in 2023. We have also realized the importance of self-identifying as Quakers in our various community involvements in our local communities and social justice groups.

Members and attenders continue to be involved individually in quite a few endeavours: the Habitat Restore, online and in person meditation groups via the public library, farm organizations, political action - with particular concern about the privatization of health care and loss of protection for farmland and the Greenbelt, support for groups resisting the plans for a local deep geological nuclear waste repository, fundraising via Out of the Cold walks for a drop-in centre for the homeless, writing letters to the editor of our weekly newspapers, ...

Some members are also involved in CYM committees: Finance and Education and Outreach, also in clerking of Pelham Half-Yearly Meeting. We are pleased that one of our young people who is at university is presently serving as Assistant Resident Friend at Friends House in Toronto.

The size of our group remains constant with 12 active participants. We have no families with children at home anymore. Being an aging group, we have tried to be supportive of members who struggle with the limitations of health issues.

Montreal Monthly Meeting

2022 was a year of seeking and growth for Montreal Monthly Meeting. We are in evolution from a mainly Anglophone worship group to a bilingual Meeting. Diversity of language, race, citizenship, age, sexual orientation and gender has enriched our group in many ways. During the year, we welcomed Jean-Louis Demers of Quebec City as co-clerk working with Janette Fraser in Montreal, to bring his considerable talents and ensure the bilingual operation of meetings and communications. While new attenders circulate, a core of members hold the doors open and are thankful for the energy and growth we are experiencing.

Friends in Montreal Monthly Meeting have met for worship every Sunday throughout 2022, in person, on Zoom and in hybrid style according to our schedule. Mid-week Meeting takes place weekly on Zoom most weeks. We have varied numbers of Friends attending from 4 to 25. We have diversity of opinion about the quality of in-person worship and online worship, but most Friends have settled into attending whichever suits them best. Because of the geographical spread of Quakers across Quebec, we envisage retaining Zoom Meetings for Worship and discussion for the foreseeable future. In fact, we have struck a technology committee to investigate how we can support and enhance these meetings.

A francophone worship group meets in Lévis outside Quebec City once a month in person, and a larger francophone group meets monthly on Zoom for discussion. In the future, a monthly francophone worship-sharing session will be held on Zoom. This group is growing rapidly “in the Spirit” with very dedicated and enthusiastic members. Their report is below.

Our First Day Meetings at the Greene Centre and online are held in both languages. Bilingual Friends are very willing to translate either way as the need arises, enabling ministry to be understood in French and English. We are endeavouring to be as inclusive as possible.

Spoken ministry occurs in most Meetings and is much appreciated and, we feel, is Spirit-led. It includes, among other things, responses to world events, personal insights, joyous experiences and, sometimes, readings. With new attenders, the subject of spoken ministry has come up for discussion. At one meeting called to discuss our spiritual growth, we encouraged members new and old to follow promptings of the spirit and speak their spiritual insights at appropriate times during silent worship. Remaining silent is a valid choice when insights gained during worship are not meant for sharing, but Friends were reassured that inspiration by Spirit is natural and happens all the time. Vocal ministry flows from that inspiration.

Newcomers, attenders and Friends have had discussions about a variety of topics related to Quakerism, including meetings to talk about what we want from our Meeting and what we can give to it. Because we have been called on to explain very basic Quaker processes to new attenders, Friends and attenders of longer standing have been challenged to review what might have become automatic, and have benefited. These meetings were held over a three-month period, attracted a good number of participants and were much appreciated. We intend continuing these discussions.

On a more social note, we have organized picnics in the park after Meeting for Worship and our first potluck lunch in three years. These have given us a chance to talk with each other and renew friendships which we had been sorely missing.

We are delighted to have welcomed a small number of children to our in-person Meeting during 2022. They have been made very welcome and we are developing flexible practices to engage them. A well organised programme will be adopted when attendance becomes consistent.

Our journal, published in English and in French, has encouraged Friends to write about their spiritual experiences. The Meeting has produced four editions this year, focusing on the themes of Love, the Seed, Quaker Community and Hope. Posted on our website, the journal reflects our values and our Quaker spiritual journeys.

Three friends applied for membership this year, an indication of the Spirit moving amongst us. One of the applications was considered over the New Year period and the other two Friends were accepted into membership during 2022.

We are feeling very positive about our Meeting and how we have attracted new attenders and are nurturing them and ourselves. However, like many Meetings, we find much of the work is done by a small number of friends and we are trying to encourage others to be more active in the organisation of Montreal MM. Some responses come unexpectedly, and this delights us.

In fact, we have generally been blessed with delight in the last year. For this, we give thanks.

Quakers du Québec francophone (of Montreal Monthly Meeting)

The group **Quakers du Québec francophone** continues to meet once a month on Zoom and once a month in presence in a café located in the city of Lévis. The group's numbers are steady, with a core group of regular attenders. Worship online is attended by about ten people (depending on the month), and the in-presence worship group varies from four to eight people. In-person worship is always followed by a shared meal.

Francophones tend to meet together rather than attend the larger Montreal Monthly Meeting weekly Sunday worship online which is held mainly in English with efforts to translate proceedings wherever possible into French. However, Francophones are always well represented at Meetings for Worship for Business which are conducted in the two languages. They are in the minority but nevertheless very involved. In general, the francophone group enjoys exchanging directly with each other following thirty to forty minutes of silent worship.

We plan to institute worship-sharing sessions which will add to our online meetings. Our challenge is to draw in more francophones and familiarize them with Quakerism. In addition to the website, more resources in French will soon be produced. We hope one day to produce a translation of *Faith and Practice*, a book which is at the heart of Quaker spirituality of our Meeting. We also plan to visit distant members who are spread out in the various regions of Québec.

Signed Janette Fraser (co-clerk to Montreal Monthly Meeting)

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting is composed of five Worship Groups covering the geographic area of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Houlton, Maine and Prince Edward Island Allowed Meeting. Reports from these groups will be posted with this report. The main sustenance in meetings for worship takes place on a weekly basis within these Worship Groups. Meetings for Worship for Business occurs around six times a year via Zoom. During the year 2022, in-person meetings slowly began to take place among the Worship Groups. In the fall, a Spiritual Retreat was organized for all of the Monthly Meetings members. The theme: “Getting to Know One Another” and was well attended by Friends from all of the Worship Groups. It was also open to visitors from other Monthly Meetings and three visitors from Nova Scotia travelled to spend the weekend with us.

The format unfolded over the two days with each participant being asked to present an incident or episode in their life that had significant meaning for them. Then each participant met with a small group to talk about their experience. Each presentation brought surprises, insights, or humour that revealed aspects of our faith community that no one knew about. The two days spent together did bring us all much closer together.

One of the precious memories of the retreat will be the close association we had with one of our members who was being treated for cancer, had not met with us in the past year, and little did we know that in a few short months she would no longer be with us. We are so grateful that we were able to spend this precious time with her.

The year was also notable with four deaths in our midst. Two of them members and two were spouses of members. Grief was front and centre as we supported spouses and families who had sustained such loss. Members of Ministry and Counsel were kept busy with composing Memorial Minutes and organizing Memorial Meetings for the celebration of the lives of those who were no longer with us. The technology of Zoom proved to be very useful in allowing people at a distance to participate in sharing memories and engaging in worship. We were all touched with the deep sharing that took place.

Members were happy to be able to travel and participate in the **Atlantic Friends Regional Gathering** at Camp Geddie in Nova Scotia. This was also a hybrid offering so that those who could not travel would be able to connect and participate. An atmosphere of joy was very palpable as that Gathering had been cancelled in 2020, was entirely on-line for 2021, and now an in-person offering in 2022. Everyone was so happy to be able to be together once again. The weekend was dedicated to hearing from youth about their goals in life, shared good food, worshipping and playing together in a lovely setting.

Members also took advantage of many Zoom offerings during the year that proved fruitful such as a Pendle Hill or Woodbrooke workshop or a Canadian Yearly Meeting Education & Outreach program. And the Half-Yearly Meeting’s Peace & Justice Committee organized presentations that were shared via Zoom. Alternatives to Violence Programs at the local prison that had been cancelled for the past two years were difficult to bring back, but were slowly being given again. Seven New Brunswick Monthly Meeting members are serving on Canadian Yearly Meeting Committees. A travel letter was provided for a member travelling to New Zealand for a month. Members also donated funds to the Canadian Red

Cross to help in the Ukraine emergency. Many members remain faithful in working with community groups on environmental and justice issues.

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting also continues its support of the Peskotomuhkati people in their negotiations for resource management in the application process for recognition as a people by the federal government. Chief Hugh Akagi keeps saying, "Oh, we appreciate the prayers of the Quakers". The negotiations were stalled during the pandemic, so we are hopeful that things will again come to fruition regarding fishing and forestry negotiations.

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting was also blessed during the year with one new member, one transferred membership, and one birth.

We also keep in touch with the isolated Friends that are geographically distant and unable to attend meetings. The Eastern Shore Worship Group consists mostly of isolated Friends. One Friend of this group is able to travel to Sackville, New Brunswick occasionally and worship with those Friends.

Fredericton Worship Group (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

For the Fredericton Worship Group, 2022 was a year of transition and adjustment, with the deaths of several members and the re-establishment of in-person Meetings. Our Worship Group felt the loss of Chris Adam and Malcolm Miller who were attenders, and of George Strunz who was a member of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting and his wife Annette. We hosted an in-person Memorial Meeting for Chris Adam who had died at the end of 2021. This was held at the St. Thomas Chapel in Fredericton. We also held an online Memorial Meeting for George and Annette.

The year began with a continuation of virtual Meetings every couple of weeks due to the covid- 19 pandemic. With vaccinations and masking the Fredericton Worship Group were able to host a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting for New Brunswick Monthly Meeting in April, and in May began meeting as a worship group every two weeks in person.

With the restart of in-person Meetings we found a space at a local community centre which provided an open and public space to meet and to welcome seekers. These Meetings were well received and, except for a 6-week break in the summer, have continued through 2022 to the present. Those attending enjoyed a deeper sense of spiritual nurture in the silence and in the after-meeting sharing that was missing from virtual Meetings. Although some who had attended online (including a family with young children) no longer came, we welcomed new and returning members and attenders to the in-person Meetings.

Some from our Worship Group also found spiritual and community nurture at the Atlantic Friends Gathering in May, at the New Brunswick Monthly Meeting weekend retreat in November, and at online Meetings for New Brunswick Monthly Meeting Worship for Business and Atlantic Half Yearly Meeting and Canadian Yearly Meeting events.

Fundy Friends Worship Group (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

Our Worship Group has grown over the last year. We are meeting in person whenever the weather is fit and on Fongo during storms or when there was concern about illness. We meet in homes or back yards most weeks and one Sunday each month we meet at St. Stephen University where they have graciously given us a room for free. We have decorated this room with handmade quilts and houseplants. We have enjoyed the use of this public space. The university is in a time of transition with the closing of its undergraduate program, so our future use of the space is uncertain at this time.

We are enjoying the presence of several new attenders including: Gretchen Denis Volenik, Sarah Xexar Murphy, and Laurens van Esch. Liz Neve has returned to worshipping with us and Jane Doull, after a short stint with us, has returned to worshipping at the local United Church where she was the Minister for many years. Colleen Gratton Gick, Julie Kronenberger, Maria Recchia, Beth and Rino Godbout, Carol Baker and Joanne Spencer continue to be regulars. Suzie Newman attends seasonally when she is at her home in St. Andrews. Brenda Bratton Blom is also a member of our worship group and attends when Meeting is on the phone as she lives on Whitehead Island. We are working on ways to include her more regularly on the telephone.

We used to meet for House Church (based loosely on the Catholic liturgy) once per month but have not done that of late. However, we are very open to the House Church style of worship should anyone in the group be willing to lead it. It has been very meaningful for us in the past.

Although our Meetings for Worship are often silent, they are spirit filled. We usually begin with a short reading and/or a piece of music, followed by Silent Meeting for Worship for 35 minutes, and then worship sharing. We take turns hosting Meeting and choosing the readings. Since Covid, we no longer share food after Meeting but still enjoy good conversation and fellowship before returning home. Our Sunday mornings together feel like an anchor point to the week. It is very nourishing to share silence and to talk about what is most on our hearts and minds. We value this sharing and the deepening relationships and community it fosters.

We are grateful to share our spiritual lives each Sunday, are pleased to be Meeting in-person again, though conscious of providing a safe and healthy space for all. Three of us attended the NBMM retreat at Villa Madonna this year and found it very life-giving.

Prince Edward Island Allowed Meeting (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

The Prince Edward Island Allowed Meeting holds Meeting for Worship weekly throughout the year at a couple different homes of its members, usually with a Zoom option for friends that are a bit farther away and to avoid winter travelling.

The meetings are found to be a quiet and refreshing period for attenders, with fellowship period enjoyed afterwards. Vocal ministry is very rare. One Friend actively maintains a Facebook Group, but other forms of organized outreach or action are not currently present. Some friends participated in weekly peace vigils organized by the Friends' House in Moscow concerning the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, participated in the Woodbrooke Center's workshop with Ben Pink Dandelion on spiritual renewal, and also undertook personal outreach to Christian Women's groups. The group regularly meets throughout the winter months for the much-enjoyed Discussion Groups, where various topics of spiritual concern are discussed over a shared meal. Also this winter a couple members attended a local interfaith gathering.

There is mixed interest and motivation in the group for participation in the wider community of Friends. Some local Friends participate in both New Brunswick Monthly Meeting and Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting to maintain those relationships, but others are more "inward facing."

Sackville Worship Group (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

The Sackville Worship Group was grateful to be able to meet in person during 2022. Five members and two faithful attenders comprise our Worship Group. One of our members lives in Nova Scotia and is only able to join us on occasion.

We try to gather for a bagged or potluck lunch about once a month as a way of nurturing our group, and we often stay in touch between Meetings. One of our beloved members was receiving cancer treatments throughout 2022. She was not able to attend Meeting often due to her lowered immune system. The rest of the Meeting supported her through phone calls, visits, and holding her in the Light.

Several of our members attended the New Brunswick Monthly Meeting Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business throughout 2022. Only one of our members made it to the Atlantic Friends Gathering last May. He reported having a very fine time. Several of us attended CYM in session via Zoom in August. And, four of the seven of us attended an New Brunswick Monthly Meeting three-day retreat in November 2022 at the Villa Madonna near Saint John. There appeared to be consensus that the gathering was joyful and nourishing. Our member who had cancer risked joining the retreat, and we were very thankful, as this was the last gathering she attended before her death in January 2023.

Three of our members serve on a Canadian Yearly Meeting body, and two of us serve in a Monthly Meeting role.

2022 was a year of uncertainty for the Sackville Worship Group in relation to where and when to meet. The Mount Allison University Chapel was our main meeting place for many years. When we were unable to venture onto campus due to Covid-19 restrictions, we began to meet in a rural United Church on alternate weekends. Once the University opened again to the public, it decided to charge an hourly rate for use of the Chapel – a rate that was out of our price range. Moreover, we felt discouraged that the University did not see us as providing a service to students or staff who might want to attend worship. We have found an alternate location, which will be noted in next year's report.

Each of us continues to serve the community and the wider world as we are led. We stay open to the possibility of a group effort should way open.

Saint John Worship Group (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

The Saint John Worship Group has had a year of growing a beloved spiritual community. We have been welcomed into a space for our worship at the Quispamsis United Church and are meeting every second week. We have four members and six or more committed attenders. We've also had several inquiries from the Saint John area. A real need is to build a wider sense of the Friends community. This is helped by our yearly New Brunswick Monthly Meeting retreat and by the annual Atlantic Friends Gathering.

Woodstock – Houlton Worship Group (of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting)

After two years of Covid-19 restrictions, in the late spring we began Meeting for Worship in-person every other First Day at several homes in Houlton – wearing masks and practicing social distancing. In September, the Canadian border opened more fully so that those in Woodstock could again also be hosts.

Our Meetings for Worship are usually an hour of precious silence, often holding one, a few, or trouble spots in the world in the Light. On occasion we are blessed with a message out of the silence. In discussion, holding Meeting for Worship every two weeks and our mode of worship is satisfying the spiritual needs of our members and attenders. Afterwards, we always have refreshments with chit-chat and meaningful discussions.

In April one of our members, Harrison C. Roper (Harry), passed away peacefully of old age. A “Celebration of Life” for him was held in May at a Unitarian-Universalist Church in Houlton for local family and friends – masks and social distancing required. Local Quakers attending arose after the period of silence to sing the Shaker song, “Tis a Gift to be Simple...” as we do at the conclusion of all our Meetings for Worship. The Zoom Memorial Meeting for Harry, under the care of NBMM, was held in August. Both events were well attended. Celebrating the life of someone who has gone before us is of timeless memory. A reflection of a life well lived, a representation of a life committed to values of compassion, justice, peace and integrity. Sharing photos, music and stories. We honour and treasure the memories.

Many New Brunswick Monthly Meeting Friends continue with activities in the local community such as environmental issues, community gardens, personal gardens, municipality management, and community social concerns.

Another member continues to be active with Wabanaki co-authors of *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous – Settler Relations* (Univ of Toronto Press), several of whom participated in the Zoom Memorial Meeting of Harry Roper along with Chief Akagi of the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik (Passamaquoddy). There are also Ecumenical activities that involve monthly meetings with a local group of Pax Christi Maine, a progressive Catholic organization dedicated to peace and justice issues with state-wide spiritual retreats, now on Zoom. The local group is following the lead of Maliseets and Penobscots in opposing the rezoning of land to allow for an underground metal minerals mine by an inexperienced mining company. If allowed, the mine would threaten the headwaters of the Penobscot River and the Meduxnekeag River, which flows into the Wolastoq (St. John) River at Woodstock.

Many of our after-meeting fellowship conversations focus on living our faith in our daily lives. Our Worship Group members and attenders look forward to Meeting for Worship together and caring for each other in the years ahead.

Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Our spiritual boat moves on, though the waters may be rough at times. We have wrestled with how to proceed in these later stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the severity of Covid-19 has been lessened by vaccination and medications, its long-term effects are not well understood. Though we all long for a full return to Worship at our Meetinghouse and a resumption of the vibrant activities we love, our Ad Hoc Reopening Committee has recommended limited reopening for now. Using Zoom technology, we continue with hybrid Meetings for Worship. We have also tried to accommodate Friends who either dislike the presence of technology at Meeting or prefer Zoom-only Meetings because ministry is more audible. So, we are experimenting with holding separate Meetings once a month, one on Zoom, the other at the Meeting House with no technology present. Some Friends are concerned that this division of Worship could split an already small community. We continue to ponder this problem.

Our tech support team and our Ad Hoc Reopening Committee have worked innovatively to improve our hybrid Meetings. We have also used our video conferencing equipment to improve visual and sound quality for hybrid weddings and celebrations of life.

The spiritual well-being of Ottawa Monthly Meeting is very good. The mainstays of our religious community—Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Worship for Business, the vigorous work of our committees, and individual Friends efforts to live according to Quaker testimonies—remain constant and strong. Zoom Meeting for Worship has continued to pull in new seekers from far-away places. Wednesday evening's Midweek Meeting for Worship has been a constant, as has the first Wednesday Meeting with a Special Focus, such as gratitude, grief, forgiveness and healing.

We have experienced transition in Ottawa Monthly Meeting. In 2022, three beloved Friends passed. We comforted, and still comfort, each other in our grief. We also were visited with the joy of a wedding.

At First Day Meeting for Worship, once the Meeting is well settled, we have continued having the Greeter share a short inspirational passage of Quaker writing. The readings are to Meeting as leavening is to bread. Rather than the practice being too programmed" as some feared, many Friends have found it focusing and helpful. There is still not unity on this practice, though, and we revisit the subject from time to time. Although Meeting for Worship can range from the sharing of good ideas to powerfully rich ministry, we come to Meeting with different needs and are reminded that it is good to be tolerant. We continue to enjoy and benefit from the after Meeting online social breakout rooms. In Zoom times, this is coffeetime!

Our Adult Religious Education and Outreach committee organized our Annual Retreat, "Surprised by Joy and Light," in January, and an excellent Quaker 101 program in the fall. At the retreat, we connected to sources of delight in hard times through Worship-Sharing, a show and tell" and a meditative art activity. The Q101 program included new and long-time attenders and was so successful that it has led to ongoing activities, and genuine engagement. At the same time, Outreach continues to be challenged due to the lingering pandemic. We expect efforts to improve once our Meeting House is fully reopened, enabling the resumption of events such as our coffeehouses and showing documentaries of Friendly interest that can attract new people to our community.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee sent monthly bulletins updating our Meeting on many instances of transforming faith into action. These included supporting women farmers in El Salvador, co-hosting the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Memorial Lantern Ceremony and encouraging Friends to engage in our ongoing work on decolonization, land acknowledgement and land reparations. Friends' objections to Canada's purchase of fighter jets, to the holding of CANSEC (the annual international arms trade fair held in Ottawa), and to Canada's unwillingness to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons were expressed through letter writing to Prime Minister Trudeau, through parliamentary petitions, and through attendance with our Meeting's banner at protest events. The war in Ukraine distressed us all. A letter from a coalition of peace groups in opposition to Canada's involvement in the Ukraine war, which Peace and Social Concerns brought to Meeting, was not signed by the Meeting because it considered only NATO's aggressive moves and not Russia's. That said, the Meeting did unite with many other churches on calling for a Christmas truce. In response to climate change, many Friends attended a global climate strike event in September. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee held a prayer vigil for the UN's Climate Change Conference (COP27) and participated in several events protesting the use of non-renewable resources. One Friend's leading to creatively save 100s of trees in Ottawa was enthusiastically supported. We raised up powerful statements about peace by Quaker organizations (Friends' Committee on National Legislation, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Canadian Yearly Meeting, American Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, and early Friends who continuously emphasized and supported non-violent action as an effective means of protest.

The Newcomers Committee received strong support for its work with two Afghani refugees, who in turn graced our Meeting with their openness, gratitude, and love. Funds were raised through a popular strawberry social at the home of an OMM couple. We also have found a Sponsorship Agreement Holder who is willing to support our application for the rest of this Afghani family.

To make sure that everyone in our community could have input into this report, we held two Claremont dialogues on topics germane to the report. We worked from four queries. Friends have had wise, and sometimes cautionary things to say. First, it can be off-putting to ask only new attenders to introduce themselves at the rise of Meeting. Instead, all could introduce themselves, adding something personal if they chose—this seems very do-able in a Meeting of our size. A second area of consideration is making our Meeting attractive to groups marginalized by the dominant culture. It is very hard to reach out to these groups without it seeming contrived. A Friend has observed that, too often such persons are unfairly asked to explain everything about their groups and what they might want.

Our Meetings for Worship for Business have been well-clerked, with committee reports thoroughly prepared. The important business gets done. However, there has been a shared feeling that having Meeting for Worship for Business on Sunday afternoons makes for a long day, and cuts into family and/or recreational time too much.

We enjoyed the spring **St. Lawrence Regional gathering**, *Relevance of the Peace Testimony to Political Protest.* We considered our individual involvement in political protest and reflected on times when political protest was not effective.

Further, we considered whether a given protest action was in line with our testimony of peace. We have discussed plans for next year's gathering. Although sometimes we get peevish over minor details, or tired from trying to do too much, all in all, it is well with Ottawa Monthly Meeting. We are attracting new enthusiastic people, and we have been enriched by our corporate Worship. We love our religious community and will all be doing our best to make it even better than it already is.

St. Lawrence Valley Friends Allowed Meeting (of Ottawa Monthly Meeting)

St. Lawrence Valley Friends Allowed Meeting continues to meet for unprogrammed worship on Sunday evenings at 5:00 pm, in the Reading Room of the Christian Science Church in Potsdam, still acknowledging the continued pandemic by wearing masks and forgoing our customary potluck supper. On the last Sunday of the month, we meet by Zoom instead so that we may continue to include former members who now live at a distance. Other Quakerly activities of our members include some of our members regularly worshipping with the Quakers of Kyiv, Ukraine by Zoom, one of our members being co-clerk of the Friends Association for Higher Education, two of our members speaking about Quaker participation in the Underground Railroad for a Juneteenth "Colors of Freedom" tour in Clinton and Essex counties of northern New York, and one of our members offering a six-week online course through Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in England. We also greatly value the regular attendance of a Friend from Kenya Lugulu Yearly Meeting who is currently living in our community.

Pelham Executive Meeting

How best to give explanation of the quality of our worship? The truth is that we can look to how we feel during and after Meeting, and even more importantly, how we live out our lives in general. *“By their fruits ye shall know them”*; Matt. 7:16

We have met in great sympathy in mostly quiet meetings for worship twice a month. A query from Faith and Practice is offered at the beginning of each Meeting. In the “Afterwords” time, we share things that did not seem ready to be spoken during the hour. Ministry and sharing take place when the structure is slightly less formal. We express a bond that is built up over time. It is better to be still and listen together than always to worship alone.

We are a diverse and welcoming meeting, that supports, empowers and honours the diverse identities that make our circle whole. We are enriched by and learning from friends from a wide variety of spiritual, ethnic and cultural traditions, as well as a range of gender expressions, sexual orientations and health challenges.

Our desire to hold hybrid meetings has not yet been realized to a meaningful extent. The interface between equipment at the place where we have met for years and other equipment is a problem.

Once a month we have a check-in where each is given space, if wished, to say what is current in their lives. The news can be everyday or deeply significant. This helps us to feel more acquainted. Our Ministry and Counsel is especially attentive to the items shared. Some warrant follow-up by phone.

The *QuakerSpeak* videos, available from Friends Journal, present modelling of how we might speak about our spiritual and religious experiences. One of these is played each month after meeting with discussion following.

Our cemetery committee has devoted time and energy to the Pelham Quaker Cemetery since it is owned and maintained by Pelham Executive Meeting (which was called Pelham Monthly Meeting from 1799 to 1911). This was the first Monthly Meeting in Canada and was established by Quakers migrating from the United States. Given the long history of our Meeting, our heritage cemetery requires rehabilitation from time to time. Work done includes clearing brush and a fallen tree, the laying down, or repair of grave stones and improved signage including a historical plaque.

Recently, our Anti Racism Committee has led virtual programs such as “The Psychological Toll of Racism”. As explained on our website niagaraquakers.org, future Anti Racism Committee events can be accessed. A major part of our anti-racism work is support and appreciation for the Niagara Native Friendship Centre and we ended this past year with a significant contribution to one of their projects.

We have members active with the Bridge of Hope Community, a faith community including the local Mosque, Mennonite and United Church members and our Meeting. We have helped settle seven refugee families in Niagara since 2016. The refugees come to us through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Mennonite Central Committee.

To paraphrase what one Friend has said in the past, how audacious it is that Friends believe that by sitting in silence together, by waiting and listening deeply for spiritual guidance, way will open and comfort will come.

Peterborough Monthly Meeting

Peterborough Monthly Meeting met regularly in 2022, caring for one another and making sure to keep connections strong.

After the first few months of continuing uncertainty because of Covid variants, we finally found a permanent home, Activity Haven, where we had met briefly in 2021. We are very pleased with the arrangement. There is enough space for meeting for worship and meeting for business; the room is also large enough to adapt for programs, and even has a kitchen. There is plenty of parking and good storage so that we can store dishes plus our computer and TV screen for hybrid meetings.

Although many of us met in person, (mostly masked due to the continuing concern about Covid), some Friends continued to prefer to meet via Zoom, either because of distance, weather, or comfort level.

Two positions came open in 2022- Clerk and Treasurer- and were filled. We also appointed a backup Clerk to assist when necessary. We thanked our outgoing Clerk who had faithfully filled the position for many years.

Attendance at meeting for worship definitely became a concern. Numbers were down, and some we thought were sure to return have not. However, many of those are still connected to the meeting through financial donations or appearance at special events, so we are cautiously optimistic. We regret that the children and several young adults who had previously attended have not returned.

Programs put on by our Program and Outreach Committee included: readings from Thomas R. Kelly's *Testament of Devotion*; a brief tutorial on use of our Facebook page; a reading by one of our attenders from his play, *Way Will Open*; a discussion of Quaker identity based on writings by two Peterborough Monthly Meeting Friends; a *QuakerSpeak* video and discussion on gathered meetings; a social get-together and game night over Zoom; a discussion of some lesser-known Friends; and a Claremont dialogue to share reactions to the Sacred Season for Climate Justice initiative. More members and attenders participated in events organized by our Indigenous neighbours and have been enriched by the experience.

In the spring, Peterborough Monthly Meeting was responsible for the program for **St. Lawrence Regional Gathering**, which was held virtually. The theme was "Implications of the Peace Testimony for discerning aspects of peaceful protest." The weekend included videos, rich discussion, peace songs, and a presenter from each meeting recounting a story of involvement in personal protest.

Members of our meeting are involved in various community initiatives. The monthly peace vigil, which involves members of other like-minded groups in the City, continued as a regular event. Several are active in an initiative promoting tiny homes for the chronically homeless.

The meeting supported one member in his application for a course "*Nurturing Faithfulness*" put on by New England Yearly Meeting.

In general, Peterborough Monthly Meeting continues to be a vibrant Meeting with many activities and sessions that enrich our spiritual lives as individuals and as a group.

Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting

Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting gathers in the bingo room of a seniors' centre in Brentwood Bay, a small community a dozen miles north of Victoria, at the south end of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The pandemic of the past two years interrupted our weekly meetings and also halted the filing of our last two annual state of the meeting reports. We were able to meet only occasionally, and that experience has stimulated love and joy in our meetings over the past year in which we've been able to meet weekly as we used to. We have about 15 active members and attenders; the average number at Meeting for Worship is 9. Our median age is 84. We have continued with our outdoor worship at Friends' gardens in the summer which allows for more intimate and family extended time together.

In the past year, three of our members have died: Jean Wilson (February 2022) Bob McInnes (October 2022) and Joseph Fasciani (November 2022). Aside from these members of our Meeting, we also note that Bob's wife Betty, a regular attender at Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting in recent years, died late in 2021. Bob and Betty were married for almost 75 years. Bob served the Meeting in many roles over the past decades. In 2022, we have been enriched by two active and enthusiastic new members. Their contributions and commitment to Quaker ideas and values have stimulated the rest of us.

We have set aside time after Meeting once monthly to explore subjects of interest and concern to members. See median age above: our most recent topic, which ran for three months, was such, an exploration and sharing of our experiences, fears and strategies for aging, perhaps with grace. This has been both spiritually and practically fruitful, generating lively participation. We plan on continuing this educational practice. There is no shortage of topics that we enjoy exploring together.

Issues we are currently engaging, or continually being challenged to engage with: Is our Meeting too warm and easy/cosy? Does our language about our forms of worship reflect what we wish? Are we paying enough attention to the larger society? To the larger Canadian Yearly Meeting? Are we too inward facing? We feel a general concern over our limited outreach. We are aware that our small meeting of elderly Friends has only so much energy and time.

Our group is very supportive and active in each other's lives by spending time together outside Meeting for Worship time. We are certainly friends as well as Friends and this is a strength of our small meeting. We feel happy and healthy in our Meeting.

Some Friends are reading *Are we done fighting?* by Matthew Legge of Canadian Friends Service Committee. One member has taken the course twice and looks forward to possible use in the coming year.

As we catch our breath and regain our bearings after the impact of Covid, and the loss of a number of members in just a few months, we look forward with optimism to continuing the fellowship and deep attachments of Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting.

Saskatoon Monthly Meeting

As our meeting has continued to meet via zoom over the last year, we have grown in our capacity for welcoming, including those from other geographic locations. Our welcome is fostered by setting a warm, open atmosphere. We introduce newcomers and invite conversation and sharing prior to and after our worship. Attenders have reported that they feel safe and welcome in our meeting.

We have experienced a marked deepening of our capacity to nurture each other. Members have reached out in caring and support of each other during and between meetings when a concern has been expressed. We are growing in our capacity to hold one another in both our joys and sorrows. Our after-meeting times of sharing, as well as our Thursday night zoom meetings, are strengthening our life together.

Our structure of 2 weekly meetings via zoom provide opportunities for the enhancement of community. It now includes monthly Book Study of Organization & Procedure, a *Quaker Speak* Video with sharing time, as well as a Worship Sharing Group focusing on various spiritual readings. In addition, we have had 2 in-person gatherings. We continue to discern together how to combine the richness of joining with Friends from a distance, and the desire for the resumption of in-person meetings.

Our growth has come with some challenges. These have been a catalyst to continue being open and flexible. We have learned to listen more deeply, to strive to be inclusive of new perspectives, to explore new ways of meeting our needs, to strengthen our conflict resolution skills. As we feel the pain of the world we live in, we endeavor to be faithful to discern how we are called to action in our lives. We are grateful for the gift of clearness committees to help in this process. As some friends join us for a time and then choose to move on, we grow and learn from our experience together. We recognize through these relationships our ever-growing gift of Beloved Community.

Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

1. How has the impact of changing technology been on the nature of the Meeting?

One Friend mentioned that it has made it possible for Meeting to be more inclusive. Zoom has made it possible to avoid exposure to ailments beyond Covid and to worship from a distance.

2. Covid restrictions are still a reality, and the end is nowhere in sight. How have Friends coped with this either positively, negatively or neutrally?

One Friend felt it has strengthened the Meeting and another said it has made it less negative with access to Zoom.

3. How has the Meeting helped with your spiritual growth and has it also contributed to your social, intellectual and emotional well being?

One Friend responded that being part of the Meeting whether attending or not is still important. This Friend has felt the support of the Meeting through various challenges, in particular with ministrations from Irene and Kate which has been very appreciated.

Two Friends feel we are building a stronger community. A Friend has experienced worship as being richer and deeper. Vocal ministry and afterthoughts are especially valued. There seems to be increasing sociability before and after Meeting for Worship. We are gradually emerging from a difficult period which has been dragging us down.

It appears that the Meeting is welcoming to newcomers who appreciate being able to think about and share issues that have meaning for them. A Friend wrote that she values being part of a community of like-minded people and the opportunities this brings to help with and learn about justice and human rights.

A Friend has the impression that the Meeting provides a valuable service to seekers and enquirers who worship with us for a time. These visitors come and go as their lives change. They may not be permanently active but we have no way of knowing what good influence the Meeting has had in the present and may have in the future. In this respect the Meeting plants good seeds. Some of our Friends are active in interfaith activities. Thousand Island Monthly Meeting has written letters of support to local Jewish and Muslim congregations when local and international members of their respective faiths were targeted with hate crimes. A Friend notes that with growing intolerance in our society, it is important to be alert to continue to support those who are victims.

Two Friends mentioned how much they have valued Meetings held at Friends' homes. The small size of the Meeting can be positive, but the downside is that a very small number of people do much of the work.. Clerks can feel overwhelmed with the amount of business.

4. Is the prospect of having to change venues an issue for you?

One Friend stated that she would welcome a change of venue as she has always found the current venue challenging: the need for more light, to rise above the surface of the earth. A University location might attract more young people.

5. Have you any suggestions that might enrich the Meeting in general?

Although Friends are happy that they are free to explore their own spiritual paths, some newer Friends have expressed a desire to have more guidance. The Meeting may wish to learn how to best meet the needs of new Friends and help them learn what resources may be available to them.

Toronto Monthly Meeting

In many ways, Toronto Monthly Meeting is sound, strong, and well managed: the Trustees have successfully accomplished incorporation; improved technology is contributing to more integrated hybrid Meetings for Worship; our children's program has resumed; Friends House is well maintained and gradually reopening to the broader community; and our committees continue their work. We feel overwhelming gratitude to those who care so much about the Quaker way of life that they give so much to our Meeting Community.

All these commitments require tremendous effort, especially on the part of those who have been involved in our meeting for a long time. But these Friends are getting older and their energy is waning. We are unsure about how they can pass their experience and commitment along to others, while also remaining open to mutual learning. We lack people to fill many roles that we see as important. We sometimes need to ask committee members to serve beyond their six-year terms or ask newcomers to take on additional responsibilities and perhaps driving them away. In spite of the considerable efforts of our Nominating Committee, key positions remain vacant. We want to attract new people and improve our efforts to nourish and engage them. Sustainability and burnout remain serious concerns.

There is concern about the spiritual life of our meeting, and specifically our Sunday morning Meetings for Worship. It is a challenge to meet the spiritual needs of both in-person and online participants. Newcomers and attenders in the 25-35 age range, are attracted to our in-person worship and a growing number now stay afterwards for tea and conversation, but there are not enough experienced Friends present in person to provide spiritual support and opportunities for questions, eldering, mentoring, and discussion. This absence brings sadness for some Friends.

Vocal ministry, when it comes, is not always grounded and sometimes shows a lack of understanding of Quaker worship and ways. We do not feel gathered. We sense that our knowledge of Quaker history, faith, and practice is weak and needs tender and careful attention. Some people miss the courage and conviction that initially drew them to Friends. We need to find ways to gain strength from both Quakers of the past and the Friends in our Meeting today.

The spiritual vitality of Toronto Monthly Meeting rests mainly on our varied opportunities for worship. In addition to Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings (in person and online), we have Mid-week Meeting for Worship on Wednesday nights (online), and a Queer and Trans Worship Group that gathers on Friday nights (in person). Our longstanding West End Worship Group continues to meet once a month.

The spiritual vigour of our meeting is also evident in our many efforts to improve society. We have groups working on homelessness, on racial justice and anti-racism, on Indigenous Reconciliation, and on the Climate Crisis. In the past, Toronto Friends Sponsoring Refugees brought three families to Canada, and the Quaker Refugee Committee, despite Covid, continues to serve refugees in Toronto. We have also reinstated our Peace and Social Action Committee.

We recognize the need for relationship building. This is already happening in several ways, such as working together on committees, gathering together over a concern, attending Sunday afternoon events such as Worship Sharing and spiritual education, and informal visits. We would like to see more of these

activities and to also ensure that we are reaching all generations and new attenders. Friends from different age groups do not always feel seen, understood, and respected by the Meeting community, and yet there is a wish to bridge these divisions. Some efforts are already under way. The Meeting of Ministry and Counsel is considering suggestions for community building and spiritually nourishing activities.

Vancouver Monthly Meeting

The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net... and drew many to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in...

Francis Howgill, 1618-1688

Vancouver monthly meeting resumed Meeting for Worship in person in April 2022. Since then, we have worked to draw our Meeting community back together again, physically and spiritually. The number of Friends attending Meeting in person has gradually increased as the year has progressed. Some Friends who had not attended Meeting for a long time began to attend in person again; the warmth of physical presence reminded some of a deep shared history and connection.

In this polarizing world full of barriers and discord, we honour and seek to deepen inclusivity in our community across racial, class, education, physical and gender bounds by gratefully embracing the universal nature of the Light Within. Quaker values and practices have prepared us well for these times.

To this end, we have taken concrete steps to become more inclusive as a Meeting. The installation of a lift in our Meetinghouse was completed during the pandemic, with many Friendly hands and minds contributing to the work. The new lift will allow anyone with physical disabilities to access our Meeting room, a long-term goal finally realized after many decades of planning.

Thanks to the tireless work of an ad hoc committee, we now have the equipment to hold hybrid digital-in person Meetings for Worship. This allows distant Friends and Friends who cannot come to the Meetinghouse to participate in Meeting for Worship. We are still finding our way in holding hybrid Meetings successfully, as software often changes and new equipment is introduced. We were grateful to have Friends join us electronically while traveling and after moving away, and rejoiced in the removal of barriers to their presence. Sadly, some Friends of long standing found the technology involved a hindrance to joining our worship in this manner. They are missed. Occasionally, they still connect with our fellowship in smaller events, such as picnics whenever the weather obliged.

We seek to foster and deepen the spiritual energy of our Meetings for Worship in person and online. Our Meeting has been led to act on our faith in several specific ways. Our renewed Religious Education committee is working to support and foster the spiritual life and growth within the Meeting. The Meeting has supported two Friends who were led to participate very actively in peaceable protests against the TransMountain Pipeline Expansion, even when this led to incarceration. They were able to remain faithful to their leadings throughout their ordeal, with the whole-hearted spiritual and practical support of the Meeting.

A request from Friends in California alerted us to a family of Afghan refugees living without adequate support in Surrey. One of our members responded by contacting the refugee family and initiating efforts to support them and connect them to refugee service agencies. These efforts led to the renewal of the Meeting's refugee committee and revitalized the spiritual spark that is created by being of service to others.

We celebrated the life of a Friend who died in January of 2022. Her memorial was a wonderful event. We also welcomed two new members who transferred their memberships from Lansdowne Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania.

Many new faces appeared on our screens and at the Meetinghouse as the year progressed. Some faded out of the picture over time, but others have continued with us. We are delighted to have welcomed these new attenders; their presence brings us great joy.

The Spirit has moved members of our community like tides pulling us together across great distances, and also apart through isolation. We have felt these conflicting movements and gently held them in the Light. The community that we've worked so hard to build is dependent upon the Spirit, the Seed, the Light. We need to wait for it and rely on it to rebuild and recreate a spiritual environment where we feel at one and gathered in the Spirit.

While we lay the groundwork, we must trust in God as we reengage in the loving embrace of the Light Within. We continue to strive to make Vancouver Meeting an inclusive, welcoming, loving community of faith. We find encouragement in Isaac Pennington's words, recorded in a 1678 letter: "There is that near you which will guide you; Oh, wait for it, and be sure ye keep to it."

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting

As the Pandemic changed, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting adapted to the challenge of transition. This was a rewarding experience for some, and disturbing for others. The effects of the pandemic and the measures necessary to mitigate these effects, took some Friends away from attending and participating in Meeting. Many Friends continued to take precautions for their health, thus were not able to attend. Others were uncomfortable using tools for online worship, or lacked the resources. We were challenged to find ways to include everyone.

We are thankful to Property Committee for adding electrical outlets which facilitated the technology necessary for blended meetings, and for acquiring an air purifier. We honour our trustees who gave much time and care to the work of resolving issues around new insurance requirements and updating our rental processes, which allowed us to welcome community groups back into our Meeting House at modest rates.

Throughout 2022 we held both weekly in-person Meetings for Worship in the Meeting House, and Meetings for Worship using Zoom. Both in-person and online Meetings gained new attenders. By the end of 2022, upwards of twenty individuals were worshipping together in the Meeting House and often between eight and twelve worshippers met regularly via Zoom. Many of these Friends had previously been isolated.

Some Friends shared in retreat at Mary Lake; enjoyed strawberry shortcake in our Meeting House garden; attended in-person Soup and Stories; re-established the Peace, Earth and Social Action committee; and recommitted to our Friends in Burundi. Hospitality with shared food was once again available following worship, and there were two garden work parties.

Those who used Zoom saw each individual Friend in their small window inside their home—familiar faces encircled in the dark frame of the screen. In the Meeting House Friends sat a little further apart than in the past, in a room filled with history, the scents of old polished wood and flowers picked from the garden, and coffee brewing in the kitchen. In all of our places, whether worshipping by Zoom or in person, we held each other in the Light—something that goes beyond prayer to an act of uplifting, supporting and carrying each other into the Light that nurtures and nudges, that reveals and guides.

Initially, Friends worshipping via Zoom found that ministry and after-worship sharing was sparse, but gradually vocal ministry occurred in at least half of the Meetings and both personal and spiritual sharing began to flourish. Participants looked for ways to translate the movement of the Spirit that leads Friends to rise to their feet to speak in Meeting for Worship, to the setting of Friends at home or outside, using various devices. Both in-person and Zoom Meetings observed that greater ministry was shared on Sundays where Heart and Mind Prepared preceded worship. Spending some months reading the queries during the first ten minutes of worship was helpful. As trust grew between us, ministry occurred without the ‘prompts’.

We had blended Meetings for Worship for Business, Soup and Stories and special-called meetings. Some committees, such as Ministry and Council met via Zoom allowing the participation of Friends who were geographically removed from Fern Street Meeting House. There were also blended worship

opportunities during two Memorial Meetings for Worship, and with Western Half Yearly Meeting in January of 2022. Those Meetings for Worship were deeply centered.

Many Friends struggled with our Peace Witness in the face of the war in the Ukraine. During 2022 many of us examined the complexities of this issue, and as the war reached into its second year, we committed to take time as a community to discuss this tragedy and support each other in our quest for resolution.

Lack of unity around a land acknowledgement for Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting continued to cause pain and discomfort for some Friends. As a result, we lost two of our members. This lack of unity caused many of us to examine the issue in a deeper way. We were called to speak with one another with both honesty and gentleness, recognizing both individual and corporate witness.

We developed a robust method of communication, with a refreshed online directory, regular emails from the clerks, and our online Fern Street Newsletter. Recognizing that some are challenged or unable to use computer technology, a number of Friends in Victoria made a ministry of reaching out in person and by telephone.

Friends considered carefully and prayerfully, how our grounds and building express our values and testimonies. Spiritual and physical work contributed to the stewardship and care of our property and treasured historic Meeting House.

Winnipeg Monthly Meeting

Winnipeg Monthly Meeting bore the pandemic much like the city itself bears winter. We followed felt wisdom that draws inward, to the banked warmth sustained by our community.

As we reflect on 2022, we see that we did not withdraw from our outward-facing callings significantly, the We are All Treaty People Celebration that seeks to honour and uphold settler-Indigenous treaty relationships; but that we naturally leaned in, toward one another. Even as Zoom was putting us on separate screens.

Grounded by the continuing presence of the Spirit amongst and within us, Winnipeg Friends offered one another love, space, time, energy, prayer in the moment. We showed up—now in body, now in heart—to uphold Friends in their concerns: prison visitation; demonstrations to discourage the downtown public library from fortressing itself against the very communities turning to it for support; the Winnipeg Lanterns for Peace event; social witness on climate change.

We are grateful to Ministry and Counsel, which has carried an especially heavy load these past few years. The Meeting for Healing, initiated by Ministry and Counsel during the pandemic, continues to meet and hold us tenderly. Through Ministry and Counsel, we maintain a support fund to assist Friends navigating spots of financial stress caused by the pandemic.

Almost from the beginning of the pandemic we maintained a blended meeting. In the simplest version of the in-person/online mix imaginable, a group of Friends who live in a co-op housing community continued to meet in their common space and they Zoomed in with the rest of us by phone. Their Zoom square was often a shot of the ceiling tile above the phone as it lay on a table.

Now these few years later, we own the magical camera Owl (fondly dubbed Margaret Fowl). We're grateful to our generous and steadfast friend the Centre for Christian Studies, who loaned us their Owl to try, and who continues to lend us a projector. We're grateful and patient with the Friends among us who wrangle the technology or try to.

During 2022 we gradually tested the waters of in-person meeting, and by the end of year, we committed to move the main Meeting from our pre-pandemic space to join those in the co-op so to bring all in-person attenders together.

In August, we welcomed that most joyful of reasons to come together, as we took the marriage of Bev Plett and Gwen Anderson under our care. For us a community, that summer day marked a breaking of pandemic ice, not an end to public health precautions and preoccupations but a sweet relenting.

We hold other marriages taken under our care in other years, and to our great pride and joy we now hold their young ones, who join a long-haul faithful teen, and—toward the end of 2022—some new youth, coming with their new-attender parents and seasoned Quaker parents who have moved to Winnipeg.

We tend to be a quiet meeting except when we're raucous, as we were in September's Meeting for Worship with Attention to Children. In-person attenders of all ages turned their worship over to crafts and games and song. We maintained a children's story time worship on Zoom throughout 2022. We're grateful to parents and story time leaders alike for keeping that connection strong and loving.

In the late Autumn we were able to keep a long commitment to plant memorial trees for two dear Friends. We planted what will become a sturdy tall shade tree for Dorothy Wise and a purple-flowering Royal Plum for our colourful Wruth Wood. Thank you to the McFaul/Hildebrandt family for creating the grove on their farm.

Our Religious Education Committee remained active through 2022, offering creative and thoughtful times of learning together. We celebrated World Quaker Day in October by renewing our Zoom relationship with Friends of Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Winnipeg Friends continued to serve generously on Canadian Yearly Meeting committees. We house the Learning Series Board here. Our experience in the wider Quaker community enriches us.

Zoom has freed us from the Meeting House and in some ways, made it possible for us to be a more inclusive, easier community. Though we look to the guidance of our still ones to remember that even in this new world the beloved community is a process and that grounded worship is a practice. If we are to be a community—a faith community—with one another in a deeper way, we call one another to prepare, reflect, observe, listen, and respond knowing that if we are going to love, we will continually fail, and we will also continually get it right.

Yarmouth Monthly Meeting

The quality of Worship at Yarmouth Monthly Meeting is rich. Vocal Ministry is sporadic, but heartfelt. Each month we have a different reading from *Advices and Queries* read during Meeting for Worship selected by the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel. This allows us to gain familiarity with the *Advices and Queries*. It also serves to help focus the Meeting for Worship.

During six weeks of the winter, we hosted a Wednesday evening zoom discussion group. This fostered spiritual growth allowing us to share on a deep spiritual level. We focused on the section Being Part of the Whole of Margery Post Abbott's book *Walk Humbly, Serve Boldly*. It was rich to have a wide variety of perspectives with some Friends being "seasoned" and some being "Quaker curious".

On October 2nd we hosted a **World Quaker Day Event**. We invited people from the community who were curious about Quakers to come for conversation, worship, potluck and socializing and included children's activities. Jeremy Vander Hoek from the Canadian Friends Service Committee joined us for the day and shared about his work with Indigenous Rights and Events.

The end of October we hosted Pelham Half Yearly Meeting over Zoom with some of us connecting from the Meetinghouse. The theme was revitalizing our Meetings.

In January, February, and March we advertised and hosted in person public evening events with movies and speakers on different themes of concern. Seeds, World Without War and the Water Crisis on Local Indigenous Communities were the three themes. This provided significant community outreach and gave us a chance to share the warmth of the wood stove heated Meetinghouse built in 1865. These events allowed us to serve our community, bringing together people with common concerns in a positive way. Our tagline for the events was "LEARN. ACT. HOPE. REPEAT." It was also a joy for friends to reconnect with one another while planning and running the evenings.

We have supported the local community by donating to two foodbanks, a newly formed local LGBTQ Youth Group, Sparta Community Centre, St. Thomas Youth Centre and to a library in a women's prison. The donations were supported with fundraising efforts. Quaker Calm Tea has become a well-known commodity which has developed a good following of consumers over several years. We grow the herbs and make the tea each year for sale. We also hosted a Holiday Urn Making Workshop at the Meetinghouse which ended up being a great success. We wild crafted the contents and people made their own urns to take home. The children also sold their hand made felted soap. They donated the proceeds to the St. Thomas Foodbank and the St. Thomas Animal Shelter.

We hosted a specially called Meeting for Worship to discuss Covid and how it affected us. It proved to be a difficult topic with some F/friends feeling quite strongly around the issues it raised. As we move forward navigating the path ahead, we pray that we will be led to unity in our spiritual community.

We are grateful for the support of our Newsletter editor who keeps us connected and informed about what is happening in our Meeting. The events and activities listed above appear ambitious but rely on a relatively small number of people to organize and implement. We anticipate that as we leave the pandemic behind, we can gain more regular attenders at Meeting for Worship.

Otterville Worship Group (of Yarmouth Monthly Meeting)

The Otterville Worship Group still seems new even though we've been meeting monthly for over four years. Meetings are starting to feel like a more cohesive gathering of friends, who are more at ease with each other than early days. We will be working towards creating stronger bonds with our Friends in Yarmouth Monthly Meeting and the wider community. Time and patience are necessary ingredients for the word about our group to spread and for curiosity to develop about what we are doing.

Yonge Street Monthly Meeting

We are thankful for the opportunity to worship together via Zoom, but do not find this a fully satisfactory alternative to in-person worship.

Our members and attenders regularly join us from as far away as Iceland and Mexico. Even some of us, who live relatively close, have a 1.5 to 2 hr drive each way, making it difficult for in-person worship and community building.

We have met weekly by Zoom. We began holding hybrid meetings for worship in May, alternating with virtual meetings. We have been unable to find the energy to open the meeting house every week. Friends have accepted this as a solution for the present. We appoint a convenor, to open and close meeting for worship. Often a reading is shared that may lead to fruitful ministry during the hour. We finish with a check-in from everyone, in an effort to be aware of what is happening in others' lives. The technological support for Zoom and hybrid meetings provided by a couple of Friends is deeply appreciated.

We are working on an evolving model of a Clerking Team, as a way to share responsibilities and develop skills among more Friends.

Our meeting grieves the loss of four long-time Friends this past year.

There is a strong Peace Environment and Social Action Committee that is involved in many valuable actions, but without our interpersonal, face-to-face meetings, we are not always aware of these efforts. As we are so spread out, some of us find ourselves being active in our local communities, unattached to our spiritual source of strength. We are reminded to avoid trying to be so politically correct that we feel unable to take action.

The meeting house was broken into at Christmas time in 2021, leading us in 2022 to find balance between protection of the meeting house, safety for Friends and compassion for the individual who was seeking shelter. We continue to work with Inn from the Cold on their building a new facility adjacent to the meetinghouse property.

The newsletter produced by one member helps build community. It is an enjoyable source of personal sharing and creativity as well as information. Several members are very active in Canadian Yearly Meeting committees. They share with us the experiences of the wider family of Friends.

We are still discovering the effects of the pandemic on our community, especially on those who haven't attended since provincial restrictions were imposed. We are learning from attenders who started to connect before the pandemic that they have struggled to reconnect. We all feel the need for spiritual nurture, growth and learning together.

There is also an overall sense of isolation. We hunger for more opportunities for social connections.

We hope this social connection will also provide support to our families with young children, to foster lasting relationships that may keep their children among us into adulthood and beyond.

Reports and Epistles from Half-Yearly Meetings

Atlantic Half Yearly Meeting (AHYM)

The Monthly Meetings and worship groups' State of Society reports in the AHYM region were reviewed by the AHYM Ministry and Counsel in preparation for this report.

All Meetings and worship groups reflect spiritual vitality and care for their attenders and members. All holding regular meetings for worship, opportunities for conversations and in some cases book clubs, retreats, as well as taking part in peace and justice activities in their communities. Friends from the region are involved in serving the Canadian Yearly Meeting in various positions.

Meetings that have had loss through death of Friends and their family members have been actively engaged in providing support in many ways. Zoom has helped with the Memorial Meetings enabling people from afar to attend.

Also noted are the inter-faith and ecumenical engagements taking place with Atlantic Friends and their wider communities. Friends in the region have overcome challenges to ensure Meeting for Worship is accessible and many are providing hybrid Meetings. In person gatherings and worship bring much joy and in many cases inquirers and new attenders. Friends are starting to hold social times again but many are not ready to share food and refreshments together.

In terms of the life of our AHYM, a very successful spring gathering (**Atlantic Friends Gathering**) was held at Camp Geddie in Nova Scotia. The theme was "Envisioning the Future." The main presentation program, "Sharing for Clearness," was coordinated with Gray Cox, Clerk, Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF), and included two Young Adult Friends: Saskia Blagaj-Berger and Jordon Daniels. 31 adults and 6 children under the age of 12 attended in person. It was a joyful time as our gathering was missed for two years with Covid lockdowns. The children especially brought much joy. Atlantic Friends provided a hard-working, effective, planning committee for this gathering.

In the fall our Peace and Justice Committee started a monthly speaker series with opportunity for discussion and questions after the presentation through Zoom. These were well attended and are continuing. The presentations are recorded and available for those not able to attend.

The AHYM Ministry and Counsel had periodic phone meetings through the year. They held Meeting for Healing through Zoom and there is interest in this continuing. Ministry and Counsel is available for support of Friends in the region. Ministry and Counsel also provided care at the spring gathering in May, overseeing Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Healing and being available for Friends who many need support.

In closing, though we are small in numbers Meetings and worship groups are doing well and are an important source of strength and nurture. Friends strive to live the Quaker testimonies in these very challenging times of war and environmental crisis.

Western Half-Yearly Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting – Epistle May 2023

To Friends everywhere –

We met once again at the Sorrento Centre, on the shores of beautiful Shuswap Lake on Secwepemc territory. We were blessed with warm weather, and both sun and rain.

Many of us are returning for the first time in years while others are here for the first time, and others joined via online connections. The adults delighted in the presence of lots of children, some of whom are the children of Friends that attended our gathering when they were children. The kids delighted in the fun and freedom they had here.

We rejoiced to hear of new members, births, and marriages within our community. We remembered Friends who died in the last year at a Memorial Meeting. At the Friday evening gathering we played a game that got us thinking about how we “Let our lives speak”. Saturday evening, we heard a presentation about water, sanitation, and hygiene which encouraged us to think about our own connections to our water sources.

We had a wide range of Special Interest Group topics, including: Joy and hope for new ways of doing the work and making things happen; A video screening of Ben Pink Dandelion’s “Quakerism and What it is like to be a Quaker”; Balancing; A Field Trip to Crannog Ales; Walking Meditation; Russia/Ukraine Situation; Laughter Yoga; Sue Big Oil Campaign; A Clerks’ Gathering; Water are Friends Views on Medical Assistance in Dying; and the Experiment with the Light.

Family Night was lots of fun with balancing and a variety of artistic expressions.

We are blessed to be able to gather as a community grounded in Quaker values yet open to new ways of living them.

Memorial Minutes 2022

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Caroline Balderston Parry

Caroline Gibbons Balderston Parry had a remarkable life characterized by boundless energy. She lived genuinely, drawing from a deep spiritual well. She continuously nurtured her spiritual life, and it showed through in many ways, but especially in the way that she cared for others and created communities everywhere she went. This minute celebrates and expresses our deep gratitude for Caroline's bountiful life among Friends and creates a record of the presence of divine grace in her life.

Caroline was a Friend from her birth on June 5, 1945, until she died on February 11, 2022. She participated in the life of Friends Meetings in West Chester in Pennsylvania, Hull in England, Victoria, Toronto, Cambridge, Ramallah in Israel/Palestine, Oxford in England, Montreal, and Ottawa. She transferred her membership to Toronto Monthly Meeting in 1978 and to Ottawa Monthly Meeting on November 7, 1991. She was a well-known and much-loved presence throughout Canadian Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. Spiritually, she described herself as "a Quaker with a Unitarian Universalist slant and [also] someone who communes with herons" (she called herself a 'Quakertarian' for short).

Her family of eight (Caroline herself, one brother and four sisters) were active members of Goshen Friends Meeting in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Her parents were William G. Balderston and Mary Evalyn Kirk; he was a truck driver/salesman, and she was a teacher. Caroline was the third child of six children.

Caroline's life was marked by some significant losses including her father when she was 9, her mother when she was 21, her brother who was murdered in 1986, her husband David Parry who died in 1995, an older sister in 2004 and a younger sister in 2006. This left only 2 sisters when she died. She openly mourned her losses throughout her life by weeping easily and often into one of her many cloth handkerchiefs, which she carried with her always. Caroline was in touch with her emotions, enjoyed examining them, and expressed all her feelings freely. She had her own heartbreak and confusions and she shared these and received support for them in private.

She attended a small private school called "The Alexander Foundation School" affiliated with Media Friends in Pennsylvania from 1949 to 1956 where she had a good introduction to creative arts (her Quaker Grandma Kirk taught at this school). From 1956 to 1962 she attended Westtown High School in Pennsylvania, a Quaker boarding school founded by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) that one of her grandmothers, her mother and her siblings also attended. She graduated as her class's valedictorian. She reveled in language, and she began to write poetry. At Radcliffe College in Cambridge,

Massachusetts, she studied American History and Literature, graduating in 1966 "with honors."

In an article in Friends Journal written in 2002, Caroline recalled how "books, stories, poetry, music,

dance, drama and visual arts were all important” at her very first school. She also noted that this same message was reinforced at subsequent schools that she attended. In the article, she described how she expressed her love of the arts through many of her lifelong interests, such as writing, collaging, singing, and dancing. For Caroline, creativity and spirituality were closely linked and a pathway existed between one and the other. It was one of her gifts and she recognized it, nourished it, and shared it. She wrote daily in her many journals and was a published author. Through her art she says she “learned to live a life of abundance.”

In 1963 she went to Scotland, England, and Europe for the summer through a volunteer programme called “Winant Volunteers.” In 1967 to 1969, after college, she travelled to Kerala, India on a Fulbright Scholarship to teach young children. The Fulbright Scholarship was a program that organized international exchanges. She introduced her young students to the arts and created handmade crayons for them from wax and coloured powders.

This was the first time that Caroline turned her attention to teaching and, like her teachers before her, she taught through the arts. She continued to teach children throughout her life, even writing children’s books including a book of poetry called *Zoomerang a Boomerang*, a book for Canadian teachers on celebrating special days in Canada called *Let’s Celebrate!*, and a non-fictional book for tweens and teens published by Scholastic Books based on the diary of a young girl who immigrated to Canada in 1833 called *Eleanora’s Diary*.

Caroline met David Parry in India and married him there, living in Kerala at first, then returning to England, settling in Hull, where Caroline worked as a teacher to support David through his undergraduate degree. Victoria, British Columbia was their next home, and the birthplace of Evalyn Parry, born in 1973.

Subsequently, they moved to Toronto in 1976 where Richard Parry was born at home in 1977. She was a wonderful and loving mother to Evalyn and Richard. She was also deeply involved in her local community, being nurtured by it and nurturing it in equal measure. Some of the groups she loved were Re-evaluation Co-counselling, La Leche League, fiddler groups, Camp NeeKauNis and storytelling groups. During her Toronto years, Caroline ran a cooperative playschool. Also, while living in Toronto, she worked as an artist in classrooms, something she continued to do later in Ottawa, and also when travelling around Ontario. She no doubt enabled an explosion of creativity including singing, song writing, dulcimer playing, maypole dancing and more.

Always adventurous, the family left Toronto for a year to live in Cambridge, England and then later they went to Jerusalem, Israel where she connected with Ramallah Friends Meeting.

The family moved to Ottawa in 1990, settling in Britannia Village adjacent to the Ottawa River and Mud Lake where they enjoyed kayaking, canoeing and bird watching. She and David started the Ottawa song circle in their living room, which continues in strength to this day, 26 years later.

Caroline loved music and had many favourite songs and artists. She played and listened to music, but she especially enjoyed engaging others in song. She loved songs that were folksy and poignant. After

she died, two dear musical friends offered up a sing-along tribute of Caroline's favorite songs starting with "You Can Do this Hard Thing" and including some real gems like "Songs Stay Sung". She used song to give her courage and remind her of her deepest beliefs and values, and to bring people together.

She contributed a great deal to the life of the Meeting in Ottawa:

One Friend ministered that "Caroline was the community builder par excellence." And that "Her contribution to helping us build those bonds was so important." She was also a very welcoming Friend to new attenders, helping them to connect with the Meeting.

She contributed most often to the Adult and Religious Education Committee. She was very involved in organizing yearly retreats, often connecting us to the best resource person from Yearly Meeting for the topic that had been chosen. She also inspired a beloved series of one-hour events in our Meeting called "Things of the Eternal." She thought anyone in our Meeting, experienced or new, had something to contribute to the rest of us. We spent many meaningful hours during the pandemic getting to know each other better and being exposed to new ideas and spiritual practices through these talks.

She once volunteered to facilitate a committee of care for a couple in the meeting whose marriage was ending. The wife of the couple, a member of Meeting, recalled that she was a really good mediator and also good at conflict resolution. During the sessions, "she seemed to do it very naturally." However, a few years after she learned from Caroline how difficult the process had been for her. It is one tiny example of the work, preparation and possibly soul searching that went on behind the scenes before Caroline appeared to serve her communities.

While living in Ottawa, Caroline also engaged in many street protests, often bringing her creative energy to the fore as in the theatrical *Memorial March for the Victims of Harperism*, which included a "die-in." She participated as a statuesque figure of mourning. She also regularly showed up to protect the environment and to stand in solidarity with indigenous peoples.

In 1995 her 52-year-old husband David died of a heart attack in his sleep. Her book *The Heron Spirals* published under her own imprint, Britannia Arts, is a personal account of her grief, her widowhood and her spirit connection with herons who provided her with guidance at times.

Many of the herons she loved lived in a conservation area called "Mud Lake." Her spiritual communion with herons awakened in her in the 1990s. It was one way Caroline connected deeply with the natural world, but it was also much more than this. She carried "a sense of herons as sacred in her heart for many years" and felt that "My path curves onward, with the herons as my guide". Her relationship with herons evolved over time. The herons became "messengers" and "a precious part of my spiritual life". They helped her to find Spirit in her daily life and her divine centre.

After David's passing, Caroline was feeling short of money. She really wanted to have an income.

She became somewhat distressed about this, and told a close friend that she had dared to get angry and prayed to God in words to this effect: "If you want me to be able to do the good I am led to do, I need work. You've got to help me get work, if I am to be able to live according to your leadings." Not long after this prayer, the Unitarian Church offered Caroline a job and she accepted, which began a period of service work through employment by various congregations as their Director of Religious Education. This showed so clearly the trust that Caroline had in the Quaker belief in a direct relationship with the divine. For her it was a personal relationship, and she navigated it with trust.

From 1998 and for 15 years onward, Caroline continued to work as a Director of Religious Education for the Unitarian Universalists, with engagements in Ottawa, Montreal and Columbus, Ohio. She retired at age 70.

She wanted to help children to experience God in their lives. One of the programmes she particularly advocated was "Godly Play" a dramatization of a story using engaging props. The stories taught the mystery of God's presence in our lives to young children, and the practice of listening to God.

In 2013 Caroline presented the annual Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture at Canadian Yearly Meeting on the subject of "The 'I Don't Know' Place: Holy Spirit with me Always". Her presentation asked, "what if this Quaker process of 'waiting patiently for Way to open' is not simply to be endured, but welcomed?"

In June of 2021, Caroline was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer. She chose to move forward with grace, openness and flair, welcoming anyone who wished to accompany her. She died at home on February 11, 2022, surrounded by her beloved family who bid her farewell in song, and the spiritual presence of her beloved friends, the communities who loved her.

Her adult children told us they were "unspeakably grateful for the incredible and brilliant community support that had been corralled around her since her diagnosis with pancreatic cancer ... : neighbours, friends, Quakers, Unitarians, contra dancers, song circlers and folkies, co- counsellors and labyrinth walkers, who brought food, ran errands, picked up medicines, gave her reiki, sent cards, drove her to medical appointments, prayed, stood outside her front door to sing, tended to her vast backyard garden, and showed up for her in myriad ways large and small". While it may seem we were gifting her, the bigger gift was from Caroline, letting us all in, and indirectly teaching us all how to die with grace and dignity.

Ottawa Monthly Meeting held an online Memorial Meeting for Worship for Caroline on March 26, 2022. A beautiful in-person Celebration of Life was held at the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa on June 25, 2022 organized by Evalyn and Richard, and led by Diane Rollert, a Universal Unitarian minister and Caroline's colleague and close friend. Many people close to her offered touching eulogies or songs.

Just before the Celebration of Life, a group of her friends published a book of poetry that she had been working on in the year before she died. The title of the book is *Turbulent Times*, a reference to losses in her life and her response to them. It was also the title of a haiku in her book:

Kneel at the altar
of now; breathe. Again, deeply.
Rest in this moment.

Caroline had many friends; she loved and nurtured us. She called us “dearie”, remembered our important anniversaries, gifted us with her time, her poetry, and bits and pieces of knowledge or wisdom she gleaned from anywhere and everywhere. She mingled us together and invited us to gather to celebrate with her, and invited us into her life, and into her very cozy home.

Caroline was often overly optimistic about how much time she had in a day and was often late, though typically it was because she went carless and commuted by bus and bicycle. Sometimes she left not quite enough time for others to speak (which is not to say that she wasn’t the best of listeners when she put her mind to it). She admitted that she needed “to stop trying to cram so many activities into my life” and that she “needed to find a way to move more slowly, savoring each day more thoroughly.” Laughingly, she promised herself “to slow down and smell the snowflakes.” She could also be very particular about how things were meant to be done, but her concerns were mostly motivated by her care of the environment.

This minute is hardly complete as it has missed many of her contributions at larger Quaker gatherings where she often ran workshops, or how she published in many Quaker forums, worked as an editor, or contributed at concerts or picnics or innumerable other Quaker activities.

Caroline was unique. She knew what mattered: it was knowing herself, connecting with spirit, loving her family & friends, building community, creating, and enabling joy in the world, and living lightly on the earth.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Marie Doan 1928 – 2022

Marie Doan, daughter of Lewis and Pearl Rollings, was born and raised on the family farm in Queensville, Ontario. She met her husband, Cal, at a local Junior Farmers dance and spent her married life on the Newmarket Doan farm, now named Monashee Farm, reported to mean “Mountain of Peace.”

Marie had a strong connection throughout her life to churches in the several communities where she lived. Later in life, while conducting research into the Doan family history, she learned about Quakers and began attending Yonge Street Friends Meeting in Newmarket. She became a member of the Religious Society of Friends in 2001.

Marie came to Quakers with a lifetime of service as a supportive farm wife, a mother of 3 children, a career as a registered nurse and a specialist in Public Health., Marie valued her independence and seemed to find a good work-life balance which included pursuit of her own interests. Marie was very creative, a prolific spinner, dyer and knitter. Her paintings and other creations were shared with others and filled their retirement home which Cal had built on land severed from the family farm. She spoke proudly of her three grandchildren. Marie and Cal enjoyed extensive travel throughout North America. They had a particular affinity for the Yukon and the mountains of Western Canada.

From the beginning of her association with Yonge Street Meeting, Marie became involved in the life of the Meeting. Initially, she was on the Library Committee and later served for many years on Ministry and Counsel, which has responsibility for the spiritual and pastoral life of the Meeting and its members. Her perspective as an older person was very helpful. Perhaps her strongest devotion at the Meeting was to the creation of a butterfly garden, which she faithfully maintained with Dorothy Trimble and other Friends. They were inspired by the arrival one fall day, by a multitude of migrating monarch butterflies which landed in the trees around the meetinghouse. Marie and others were deeply concerned about the future survival of monarchs in the face of environmental degradation and loss of local fields of milkweed.

Her calm, quiet demeanor and consistent presence in worship was Marie’s ministry to the Meeting. She usually sat in the same place, near a window overlooking a lilac bush. Often in the summer a bird would perch in the bush, giving Marie a sense of visitation from her daughter who died at a young age.

Marie was a “modern thinker,” very practical and open to society’s changes. She shared her opinions very directly but was ready to hear other points of view. She believed every person deserves respect, acceptance and love.

After Cal’s death, and in the face of her own declining health, Marie left her beloved home and moved into Alexander Muir Retirement Home. She continued to spin and paint and took an interest in activities in the Home. Over the span of a couple of years, as she faced worsening health, she made practical preparations for her own death, ensuring arrangements were in good order. Marie died with her children, Tim and Sandy, by her side, as she had wished.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Gail Harwood



JUNE 15, 1953 - JANUARY 15, 2022

We remember Gail Harwood with deep fondness and gratitude. For decades she was a dedicated and beloved member of Vancouver Friends Meeting. Many Friends first met her after Meeting where she made sure hot coffee was plentiful and newcomers felt welcome. Bustling over the coffee grinder, she invited Friends into conversations on early Friends, environmental stewardship and social justice with a warmth and humour that nourished the Meeting.

The youngest of four children, with two older brothers and an older sister, Gail came from the prairies of Ontario, where her Ukrainian ancestors first settled in Canada. She received a BA from the University of Waterloo and began her career as a teacher. In 1980 she took a job teaching English in Nigeria, and two years later she moved to Zimbabwe where she taught for six years. In 1989 Gail returned to Canada where she taught in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and pursued a Master's in education. Her experience working with marginalized student populations made equity in education into a personal and professional passion. "First, I believe that access to education and lifelong learning are human rights," Gail writes in a personal statement. "Second, each student has a voice and achievable goals which the teacher must facilitate through understanding and working with the individual's learning style and learning needs. Third, intellectual ability is not the sole property of any one class, gender, race, sexual orientation or physical mobility."

Gail's passion for equity extended beyond education and was a core part of her spiritual life. Gail studied many different faiths, including Buddhism and Islam, finally finding her home with Friends, where the focus on humility and equality resonated with the values she brought to her teaching. In her dear friend Joan Strauss' words, "The spirit world was as real to her as the air she breathed." She was active in Vancouver Friends Meeting, regularly participating in Yearly Meeting activities which took her on memorable road trips, often accompanied by Joan.

Gail loved finding adventure in the journey, both the spiritual journey and the physical one, and on their road trips she took Joan to historic sites along the way. They visited many sites of the North-West Rebellion and railed at the distortions of history on display at the RCMP museum. Gail also sought out more light-hearted destinations as well, insisting on visiting Vulcan, Alberta, "The Star Trek Capital of Canada" and oversized attractions like world's largest Ukrainian Easter egg, the largest Kielbasa, and the Giant Cowboy Boot.

Between 2002 - 2006, Gail lived on Bowen Island where she ran a bookstore called Madame Rose Books & Sundries, later expanding it to include a photography business, Madame Rose Photography. She wrote a book, Matty's Dread, naming the main character Debbie, after her beloved sister who had passed away years earlier. She encouraged Joan to take a comedy course at Yuk Yuks comedy club, and they put together an act called the Klutz Sisters that performed at the Meeting House. Her creative energy was boundless and irrepressible, full of humour and love.

In 1992 she was asked to be godmother to Juliet and Nikolai Neun-Hornick, the daughter children of dear friends, a role she took on with her characteristic love and enthusiasm. She had fun over the years dressing up for Halloween with Juliet and her family, one year hiding under a sheet on their porch, cackling like a witch, and another year dressing as a raspberry. Juliet reflects that, "for 29 years, she was my best friend. She was a fierce and loving friend and she taught me how to love just as fiercely. Gail led by example. Her compassion, warmth, wisdom, optimism and humour were rare and special."

Gail's warmth in welcoming people into the Meetinghouse and Vancouver Friends Meeting community served as the entry point for many people. "I will always remember Gail," Mike Tilley explains. "Upon my first visit to the Meetinghouse, when I opened the lower door to the kitchen, Gail and Eric were the first ones I met. Gail made me feel at ease instantly. I was welcome to the Vancouver Quaker community from that point on. I can tell you in all honesty, in future attendance at the Meetinghouse, when in the kitchen and the door opens with a newcomer entering, I will always be reminded of Gail."

It is with gratitude and love for the life of Gail Harwood that we submit this minute.

-Phoebe Titus, on behalf of Ministry and Counsel and Gail Harwood's Memorial Committee

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of John Joseph Horvath

1945 - 2022

John Joseph Horvath was born on August 24, 1945 in Chicago, the youngest child of Steve and Sophie Horvath. He attended Our Lady of Hungary School and Mendel Catholic High School founded by the Augustinian Fathers. His education continued at the Catholic University of Notre Dame. He graduated with a BA in Philosophy and maintained an emotional connection with Notre Dame University throughout his life including supporting the football team. While he was at Notre Dame, he began exploring Quakerism and periodically attended 57th Street Meeting in Chicago during summer holidays.

In 1967 John began a Master of Philosophy degree at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He began attending Meeting for Worship at Atlanta Friends Meeting. At the time the war in Vietnam was increasing in scale and scope. Like many young people at the time, John had begun to question the status quo. He was deeply impacted by his experiences living in the Deep South, a place of segregation and social conservatism, where a white man with a beard was the subject of suspicion and veiled threats.

It was at Atlanta Friends Meeting that John met Barbara Felts, who was also studying at Emory University. John was wrestling with his growing belief that not just the war in Vietnam was very wrong, but that all wars were wrong. He was led by the Quaker Peace Testimony to declare his position as a Conscientious Objector. His draft board immediately refused his application, resulting in the loss of his student deferment, and reclassification as A1 - immediately ready to be drafted. Barbara had been accepted by International Voluntary Services to teach English in Vietnam. The program was cancelled after the Tet Offensive, and Barbara agreed to drive John to Canada. John's family was unhappy at his decision to be a CO and to go to Canada. John and Barbara arrived in Toronto on Victoria Day weekend in 1968.

In Toronto they found a supportive Quaker and draft dodger community. They were married in Toronto Friends House in August 1968, with strong support from both their families. They became Resident Friends at the meeting house in Toronto and two daughters, Jennifer and Rachel, were born. After years of avoiding a return to the US, John went back for his father's funeral in 1977 and encountered no difficulties from authorities. But travel to the US was never free from stress for John after the threats from the government for his Conscientious Objector convictions.

While still living at Friends House, John received a degree from the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto and was hired to teach grade 5 in Bramalea. The family moved to Mono Road in 1972, where Dylan was born. At this time, they became members of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting. There are stories of taking the children to the outhouse before plumbing and electricity were installed as part of the raising of the meeting house and building the basement in 1975. John served as recording clerk in the 1990s and on other committees at Yonge Street Monthly Meeting.

During a break from teaching, John tried various careers: groom at the Woodbine Racetrack, stay at home Dad, subsistence farmer. He permanently returned to education and was a beloved teacher, fondly remembered by his students, instilling in them values for life.

John taught at Caledon Central Public School. At different times he had each of his three children in his class. He later became a guidance counsellor and then a principal with the Peel District School Board, building lasting relationships with staff and parents. His schools in Brampton had many members of the South Asian Community and John was adept at welcoming them as valued Canadians. Although officially retired in 2001, he returned as an acting administrator in schools where his experience and expertise were put to good use.

John proudly celebrated his Hungarian heritage and passed that on to his children and grandchildren. The “bacon fry” that was celebrated on July 1st was a tradition John brought from Chicago. The colours of the Hungarian flag were reflected in the sandwiches that were cooked over the open fire and the family sang both the Hungarian and Canadian national anthems and played games. He was a devoted grandfather to his five grandchildren, who would enjoy his jokes, often delivered with a deadpan expression.

John had a great love of sports; horse racing, and both football and soccer, where he followed the English league. He and Barbara were regular opera goers and he had a great love of Irish literature. He was also an accomplished cook. He loved all kinds of music and played guitar.

During his retirement John found a number of ways to live out his Quaker-based spirituality. John had a deep understanding of and acceptance of people, showing an openness to encounter and share who they were. He was a dedicated volunteer patient escort at Headwaters Health Care Centre in Orangeville. He was also led to work as a lay chaplain. He felt strongly that patients benefitted from his non-dogmatic spirituality and ability to listen.

He also began a career as a wedding officiant with a nondenominational organization, All Seasons Weddings. During a 16year period he officiated at almost four hundred weddings, (including his daughter Rachel’s), the last one being in February 2022 just before beginning radiation for throat cancer at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.

John died peacefully at the Bethell Hospice on June 1, 2022.

Memorial Minute for William Cecil McMechan

Sept. 13, 1924-March 11, 2023

Bill, as he was known in Canada, was born the fourth of five children to William and Jane McMechan, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, September 13, 1924. He met his wife, Rosemarie Löwe, while volunteering at the International Freundschaftshein (Friendship Centre) in Bückeburg, Germany. This Centre was not Quaker, but was heavily supported by Quakers in the U.K. and in the U.S. The couple were married in 1954, under the care of Bad Pyrmont Monthly Meeting. They became the proud and happy parents of one daughter and three sons.

The family emigrated to Canada from Dublin in 1957, settling first in Port Hope, Ontario, where they quickly joined Wooler Monthly Meeting. Bill had been accepted into membership at the Friends Meeting in Frederick Street, 1949. Prior to this, he had been highly evangelical, living with a group of other young men in "Faith House," and preaching to sailors in the dockyards. Meeting the Quaker Isaac Wyle on a bicycle tour changed all that, and a small group of elderly Friends who met on Sunday evenings became his spiritual home.

Bill became one of the founding members of Peterborough Monthly Meeting and its forerunner, Peterborough Allowed Meeting.

Having served an electrical apprenticeship, Bill had no trouble finding work. He was soon encouraged to obtain teaching certification at the Ontario College of Education in Toronto, to teach electricity and mathematics at one of the Peterborough high schools. In 1965, External Aid of the Canadian government was looking for trades teachers to serve in third-world countries, and Bill enthusiastically applied, was accepted and was offered a job in Barbados to help establish a technical institute there. Having worked in the United Kingdom, and Barbados being extremely British, that was in his favour. and he was encouraged to extend his stay. However, in order to have their children settled in Canadian schools, the family returned to Canada after two years.

Ten years later, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) had been established, and Bill was offered a similar job in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He accepted it eagerly, staying there about three years and returning later for several short-term assignments. Again he trained technical teachers and supervisors in industry. The family organized Meetings for Worship, which were joined by a German Quaker and two Canadian Mennonites and were held on weekday evenings in the back yards of different homes. While in Tanzania, Bill was able to attend Quaker gatherings in Botswana in 1977 and in South Africa. In Namibia in 1989 he was an observer for the World Council of Churches delegation supporting the country's move toward political independence. Bill introduced the various bishops and high church officials to the silent Quaker grace, which they practiced for the remainder of their stay.

While in Canada, Bill served on most CYM committees, becoming clerk of many of them for various lengths of time. For young immigrant families, the Quaker community replaced the families they had left behind. NeeKauNis was a focal point, enjoyed over the years, with many Quaker uncles and aunts for

the McMechan children. They went on many wilderness canoe trips with the Keith family and lent a hand in the reconstruction of the Simcoe-Muskoka Meeting House in Orillia.

Upon retirement, Bill and his family used their practical skills to build a passive solar berm house in the country near Hastings, Ontario. The house, pond, lake and woods provided the setting for a number of meetings for worship and retreats.

He was extremely committed to prison visitation and took a leadership role in expanding the Alternatives to Violence (AVP) program internationally.

Bill became an accomplished carver in wood and stone, and was active in the Northumberland Carvers.

He was also an enthusiastic sailor, after building a racing dinghy while in Barbados.

Bill embraced life. He had an infectious sense of “Irish” humour, a twinkle in his eye, a very big heart; and was always ready to listen to anyone’s concerns and to help if possible. He regretted that all his children moved to western Canada after graduation from university, and that he saw his six grandchildren only rarely while they were growing up.

In keeping with a decision made several years ago, Bill was laid to rest by his family in a 'green' burial plot, on top of a hill overlooking Rice Lake. A Friends' Memorial Meeting was held at Elmhurst Resort near Peterborough, on March 25, attended by many Friends, friends, and neighbours. Those who were prevented from attendance in person by a vicious late winter storm joined in on Zoom.

Memorial Minute Pat Moauro

1937-2022

We were saddened at the loss of Pat Moauro, a member of Coldstream Monthly Meeting, on September 21, 2022. Pat came to the Meeting late in life. He had an inquiring mind and was a seeker for a spiritual home. He sought out different religious groups before finally joining the Meeting.

Pat was a journalist with the *London Free Press* for 26 years and had his own monthly paper. He was also Managing Director of Morcom Publishing Company. He used his skills to produce newsletters and articles for the Meeting, the Canadian Friends Historical Society and *The Canadian Friend* and published a compendium of Quaker writings entitled *Quaker Quest*.

Within the Meeting he was always noncritical and added wisdom to our discussions and Business Meetings. Pat served on committees, including Communications and Outreach, Nominating and Religious Education. He also documented events within the Meeting using his talents in photography and journalism.

Pat enjoyed life in general and liked travelling. His musical interests included playing the piano accordion and singing in a senior choir.

Testimony to the Light in the Life of Vernon Willis Mullen

23 March 1923 Beal's Island (Jonesport), Maine, USA to 1 August 2022 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Our beloved Friend, Vernon Mullen died on 1 August 2022, after a long illness. The restrictions of the pandemic had been a bittersweet situation for all of us knowing that Vernon and Dana craved visits from family and friends while needing protection from COVID-19.

His Memorial Meeting was held on 29 October 2022 in person at the Ottawa Meetinghouse and by Zoom technology. It was supported with great love by members of his extended family, by our Meeting community and by Friends nationally.

Vernon was born on Beal's Island, Maine, USA to Handley Mullen and Ethel Sabine Mullen. Vernon was the third child in a family that included two sisters and three brothers, and as the years progressed, many devoted nieces and nephews. His large extended family was centred in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In later years, he and his brothers maintained their grandfather's original farm in Easton NS as a gathering place for the extended family.

Vernon's father was a minister in the Reformed Baptist Church with churches in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Maine. The children were raised with strict rules to guide them to holiness and atonement for inherited sin. But as people with a natural love for each other, there was always care, compassion, honesty, joy in community, and respect for individual spiritual expression within bounds, of course.

Vernon completed high school and was a good scholar. From 1940 to 1942, Vernon attended Eastern Nazarene College (ENC) in Wollaston Massachusetts, a Baptist college with ties to the family but slipped off to join the RCAF at the age of 19, in spite of an exemption that would have kept him from the US draft. Vernon became a Pilot Officer trained to fly Spitfires and was posted to a unit in Belgium in 1945. On 31 March 1945, Vernon and another member of his squadron were shot down by an American flyer. Vernon escaped from the burning aircraft, landing in relative safety on a German machine-gun nest. Vernon spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner and for the rest of his life marked the day he survived the crash as a re-birth. When Vernon related this story, he never failed to mention the bitter irony of being shot down by an ally and protected by his often kindly captors.

Upon his return to Canada, Vernon enrolled in the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. On 23 March 1946, (his birthday) he married Dana Shirley Payne at Meductic, New Brunswick. After his graduation, he and Dana took their first posts as teachers in 1949, when they accepted positions to teach in Ethiopia. Their contracts expressly stated that they were not to be engaged in any sort of missionary work, which Vernon, in his spiritually searching way accepted as a good thing.

This posting was followed by many others that are recounted in Vernon's memoir, *Them lions will eat them up* (Voyager, 1999). This rollicking book records his and Dana's great adventure travelling the world teaching English and so much more. When Vernon and Dana were teaching in Sarawak on the island of Borneo, the school had Christian, Muslim, Animist and atheist students, but only two religious classes Christian and Muslim. A small delegation of animists and atheists came to Vernon and asked him if he could lead a religious class that wasn't either Christian or Muslim. He did. It was

called the “heathen” class and became very popular.

In *Them lions*, Vernon’s vitality as a young man leaves us breathless and his lively sense of humour is irrepressible. He and Dana never forgot that life really is an adventure, and they had that adventure. His abiding respect and love for Dana shines through his writings.

Quaker Meeting was where he and Dana made their spiritual stand though both Vernon and Dana had attended ENC. Vernon’s family respected his choice. Vernon’s elder brother, a professor at ENC when asked about the nature of God said: “I think Vernon comes the closest to

capturing what would be my thoughts of God”. Vernon and Dana would sit in Meeting fifteen minutes before the start time anchoring the silence before the actual meeting began sitting quietly contemplating the beginning of their First Day and the week to come. Without saying a word, they sent out a calming steadying message.

At Meeting, he enjoyed active and focused tasks. Other aspects of Friends’ work he found, in his own words, boring. Vernon was a member of the premises committee and many committees of care. He made a special point of welcoming all newcomers and learning names and personal situations. He was sought by many for his advice and assistance giving special support for men in the community. He held a concern for all of us. People recognized the spirit moving in Vernon and sought him out for help with their own spiritual lives as he did with the “heathen” class, as he did with many others.

Vernon was a loyal supporter of the Quaker Book Service (QBS) but wasn't part of the committee for many years. The work was physically demanding as the books had to be packed, loaded into the car, taken to the post office for shipping, and then unloaded and unpacked when they got to Yearly Meeting. Nevertheless, he and Dana cheerfully undertook this valuable and deeply appreciated service to Canadian Friends for many years, until QBS was laid down.

Vernon rarely spoke in Meeting but annually offered a message of gratitude and remembrance on the anniversary of his survival. Vernon had befriended his young German captor, also from a Baptist family and keenly felt the absurdity of expecting God to take sides. Vernon built on these events and his continuing awakening in the world to explore learning, differences, and spirit in all forms, in his second gift of writing *God answers back (Self-published, 2008)*. The book begins with “‘Seek and ye shall find’ said Jesus almost 2,000 years ago. I am now *The Seeker...*” and proceeds to take the reader on a spiritual journey into an understanding of the nature of God.

Vernon was drawn to the universality of God that resides in all things. In Vernon’s love of nature and especially birds, we can sense his dynamic search for the Light. Vernon applied for membership in the Society of Friends on 5 December 2007 in his 84th year. When looking for clarity in his relationship with Friends he wrote in *God answers back* on p 92: “I realized that I could overcome any differences I had with Quakers at a higher level. I could reach a unity above both”. He was joyfully and noisily accepted into membership on 13 January 2008.

At his Memorial Meeting, many stories were shared about Vernon’s kindness and integrity. He inspired deep trust in so many. A Friend has said that: “the thing that was the most powerful thing for me [about Vernon] was his spirituality. It was very unusual spirituality: it was a human, reasoned, thoughtful,

natural spirituality. And that's one of the reasons it was so easy to connect to him.” Integrity and compassion were indelible in all of Vernon’s words and actions. We were blessed to have him in our Meeting.

A Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of our Friend Lesley Read

Lesley was a beloved Friend among us. She was a founding member of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting and a radiant Friend for over fifty years. She brought her professional and deep spiritual wisdom to many concerns of Friends at both the local and national levels.

Born in Blackpool, England in 1943, Lesley obtained a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree from the University of Birmingham. She later obtained a Master's degree in Transpersonal Psychology. Lesley and her husband John came to Canada in the mid-1960s. They settled in Sackville, New Brunswick, raised a family, and participated in the life of the community.

Lesley was passionate about supporting and healing others through her thirty-five years as a social worker for Family and Children Services. She also led therapeutic and healing touch sessions, as well as numerous counselling sessions for groups and individuals. She volunteered as a Grief and Bereavement group leader for many years. Lesley lived the wisdom of our Quaker advice, "Let your Life Speak."

Lesley loved fun, and she loved creating beautiful watercolour paintings. One Friend recalls, "To help me celebrate my sixty-fifth birthday, Lesley and [another Friend] came to my place for the day and we played with watercolours. We had paintings all over the bathtub and the back deck hanging to dry like colourful laundry. It was my best birthday gift ever. After that day, Lesley sent me one of her watercolour paintings that she had made into a card. I never sent it to anyone else because I cherished it with fond memories of that day together."

One of Lesley's watercolours was bordered with a Navaho prayer that resonated with her spirit and life, "May beauty surround you. Beauty before and behind you. Beauty above you and about you. And may your road home be on a Trail of Peace."

Among other Quaker roles, Lesley served several terms on Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. She faithfully undertook this work with joy, even when it was difficult and controversial, such as drafting the Canadian Yearly Meeting policy *Safe Nurture of Vulnerable Persons in our Care*. Friends were grateful for Lesley's gift and grace in forming conciliatory statements for vulnerable groups.

Lesley was a dear Friend and a beautiful soul. We loved, admired and respected her for the wonderful person she was, and for her many gifts and talents. Her light still shines, and her loving spirit is with us still.

We give thanks for the Grace of God in the Life of our Friend Lesley Read.

Memorial Minute for Harry Roper

Since I am coming to that holy room, / Where, with thy choir of saints forevermore, / I shall be made thy music; as I come / I tune the instrument here at the door, / And what I must do then, think here before.

John Donne

We gather today to give thanks for the grace of God in the life of our friend Harrison Crouse Roper (Harry). Harry was a true Elder among us. He and Marilyn together shared a spiritual journey that inspired and challenged those who knew them and shared their vision of a kingdom of peace.

Harry passed away peacefully of old age on April 28, 2022. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 10, 1932 to champions of racial justice. He lived in the south until attending a Quaker College (Haverford) in Pennsylvania where he met his future wife at near-by Bryn Mawr College, also founded by Quakers. Upon his graduation in 1955, he and Marilyn wed.

After a sojourn in Washington, D.C., where Harry achieved a Master's in Music from Catholic University, they moved back to the Haverford area. Harry and Marilyn joined the Religious Society of Friends in 1962 at Valley Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. They later transferred their membership to Haverford Monthly Meeting.

In 1982 Harry retired early from West Chester College (and Marilyn from the University of Pennsylvania Museum) in order to move to Houlton, Maine to avoid paying taxes for war and preparations for war. The Ropers subsequently transferred their membership to New Brunswick Monthly Meeting, enjoying activities with Canadian Friends and with Wabanaki friends in their traditional, unceded lands, from whom they learned much.

Harry was a gifted musician, teacher, and composer. He reached out to the world through his music to bring peace and understanding - dare we say more harmony - on the local and international level. As well as volunteering to conduct the Fredericton Chamber Orchestra for four years and the Northern Maine Chamber Orchestra for twenty, Harry loved making music with children in daycare centers and elders in nursing homes. He also loved being in the woods, composing songs while bush-hogging. One such song is *March for a Brightening Day*. He livened many a Quaker event with spontaneous song. In his final days he would play his violin while resting in his bed, his son sitting at the end of the bed to play duets with his Dad. Harry would be at home with the choir of heavenly hosts.

He and Marilyn simplified their lives to honour our Quaker testimonies of simplicity and peace and to minimize the conflict of praying for peace while paying for war. Together, they visited prisons, built bridges of understanding with First Nations people, and supported local and international efforts of Friends and others to foster justice and peace. Truly, this Christ-centred Friend was an inspiration and example to us all.

A wonderful and greatly beloved family man, Harry (Poppy) is survived by his wife, two sons, two grandchildren, spouses, and four great grandchildren in the Bangor, Maine area, a sister in Oregon, and many nieces and nephews.

We are grateful for the time we shared together and give thanks to God for the gift of God's Spirit in the life of our friend Harry Roper.

Frank Lloyd Showler

17 August 1919 – 10 February 2022

Frank Lloyd Showler (“Lloyd” for Lloyd George) was born in Toronto of parents from Yorkshire, England. As a child he roller-skated all over the city. All pastors in the United Churches he attended discussed war and social issues, and in 1938 the United Church declared that war was contrary to the mind of Christ. The church backed away from this position in 1939, but Frank never did.

As a conscientious objector (CO) during the Second World War, Frank did alternative service in highway work camps in Ontario and British Columbia, and then served as an orderly in Toronto General Hospital; after he helped to organize a union, he was sent elsewhere. He also taught school in a Japanese internment camp in Lemon Creek, British Columbia.

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1943 Frank’s friend Walter Alexander invited him to a meeting at his parent’s home, where Frank met Walter’s sister Isabel. Frank and Isabel were both active in young adult groups at Carlton Street United Church and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). They kept in touch while Frank was teaching in Lemon Creek, and in 1946, Isabel joined Frank to teach Chippewa children in a two-room elementary school on Christian Island (now Beausoleil First Nation). They were married in Toronto in 1947.

Back in Toronto, Frank went to university, had several teaching positions, spent a year at Emmanuel College, and then went to work for the Ontario Department of Highways, first in Toronto and then in London, Ontario. In 1955 Frank and Isabel adopted five-year-old Stephen (now deceased) and in 1957, six-month-old Carolyn. They also got involved in peace issues, including the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Frank was on the board of the Student Christian Movement. Many family summer holidays were a combination of family camping and direct action with the groups such as the FOR. Frank also supported the grape boycott led by Cesar Chavez, and campaigned against the war in Vietnam.

Frank retired at age 60, and then spent two years on staff at the Canadian Friends Service Committee, but his peace work and activism were always more interesting and important to him. Frank and Isabel were often a first point of contact for Vietnam War resisters and they provided temporary housing for some of these young men in a strange city. Later they housed refugees from Chile and Central America. Frank also supported the Iraq War Resisters who, in turn, were influenced by his example.

Frank and Isabel had come to know Quakers in the course of their peace work, and when Isabel needed a different kind of worship experience than she had in the United Church, the family began to attend Quaker Meeting. Isabel joined Toronto Monthly Meeting in 1976. Frank remained a faithful attender, even sitting in his wheelchair in his last years, but he never became a member. He said it was partly because “I feel more passionate about peace, human rights, labour rights, and homelessness than I do about the running of Friends House.”

Frank seemed to be at *every* demonstration. People said that a demonstration didn't officially start until he showed up! He was arrested a number of times (including the time he poured fake blood on the steps of Queens Park). At age 95 Frank joined the Toxic Tour to show solidarity with the Aamjiwnaang First Nation living close to Sarnia's Chemical Valley.

Isabel died in February 2006, but Carolyn her family lived with Frank for many years, taking wonderful care of him. To know Frank, even briefly, was to feel recognized, cared about, and supported. Frank embodied the Quaker peace testimony in his faithful service. He invited all who attended Meeting for Worship to become involved the many activities he shared so passionately with everyone. When he was asked how, after a lifetime of social justice work, with all the obstacles he continued to face, he still kept going, he replied:

We are not called to be successful, but we are called to be faithful.

Testimony of the Grace of God in the Life of Virginia Eunice Smith (Gini)

1939 - 2022

Gini's life as a member of the Religious Society of Friends defined who she was and whose she was.

Gini was born to Katharine and Johnson Smith in Wooster, Ohio on the 14th of February, 1939. She was raised as an only child living in a home that also held the memory of a brother who died before Gini was born. She had a large extended family which included 15 cousins with whom she was close. A childhood of frequent fun filled family gatherings had to have planted Gini's delight in parties.

Gini was raised in the Presbyterian church in Wooster. Her paternal grandmother was from a long-standing Quaker background, and it was her influence that drew Gini to the Religious Society of Friends. After high school Gini studied at Earlham College, where her knowledge of what it meant to be a Quaker found its way to her heart. Her faith home was established.

All of Gini's summers were spent at the family cottage on an island in Blue Sea Lake located just north of Gatineau, Quebec. Her summers were all about sailing, canoeing, fishing and star gazing. Gini was the 'summer children's' social convenor. She was the one who gathered everyone together to participate in whatever fun she was having. Those formative years living close to all the blessings of the natural world nurtured in her the deep faith that carried her through life.

In her mid-twenties Gini sought independence and made a permanent move to Canada. She settled in Ottawa where she became a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting. From Ottawa she moved to Toronto, and in addition to being a part of the Toronto Monthly Meeting she served as Resident Friend for a few years. Down the path, as Gini would say, she made her way to Yonge Street Monthly Meeting and we were blessed to have her in our midst. In addition to her diligent service on meeting committees, Gini modeled deep listening, discernment and unity. A Friend's ministry at the memorial meeting expressed gratitude for the living witness of Gini Smith.

Canadian Yearly Meeting was very important to Gini. When it was time for the yearly meeting, wild horses would not keep Gini home. She served on a variety of committees over the years and brought a calm and worshipful presence to every deliberation. She attended for the deep prayerful work of the gathering as well as for the delight of being with old Friends and making new ones.

Gini's faith in God was by no means restricted to her Quaker community. The Toronto Area Interfaith Council was strengthened by Gini's attentive work to nurture recognition of the common ethos in all the faith paths in the world. She participated and helped to expand a Catholic Prayer Group, attended regular meetings of a Christian Meditation Group and also Centring Prayer. The following words expressed by Carl McColman could easily have been Gini's words:

"I stand in the middle seeking a spirituality that is radically faithful to the Christian tradition while radically open to the wisdom and truth wherever it may be found."

Gini met her friend Kay in Toronto. They formed a strong and loving partnership. They participated in many avenues of creative expression including clowning and ceramics. They enjoyed their travels, being with friends and always the animals. Their home was filled with books that spoke to their hunger for deepening their religious understanding. Kay is buried in the Yonge Street Friends Burial Ground and now Gini has joined her there. In the years after Kay's death, Gini was often seen sitting in her car beside the burial ground. Inquiring Friends would stop to see if she was ok. She'd smile and say, "I'm just having a visit."

In Gini's "Log of Life Book" her mother wrote, "Singing has been a dominating part of your life so far. You sing continuously." There was music in Gini's soul. For many years she sang with the Pax Christi Chorale, "one of Toronto's finest choirs". When her mobility was compromised to the point that she couldn't navigate the risers for performances, she reluctantly resigned her place. Within months of laying down the large choir, she had joined a group singing Madrigals.

Gini had more energy than most people. Gini was a connector. She developed a relationship with everyone she met. When joining her on her various rounds, you were sure to get a personal introduction to the people in the shops, offices and restaurants. She really knew these people. Her outreach was never a passing hello. When Gini made the tough decision to give up her car, she established a friendship with her frequent Taxi driver. He soon understood her need to simply pick up a latte and spend some time gazing at the lake.

The confinement that COVID imposed was very difficult for Gini. She had many lonely days, but found a refuge and a ministry by staying in touch with people. Her phone was so very important. Gini's very being nurtured in others the attributes she modeled: searching, listening, patience, courage, loyalty, good cheer, and Love.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

Memorial Minute for George and Annette Strunz

We gather to give thanks for the grace of God in the lives of our friends George and Annette Strunz. Their attached obituaries, wonderfully and sensitively written, testify to the quality of their lives.

Both Annette and George shared a childhood overshadowed by the dark reality of Nazi Germany. Both were to find strength in their love for one another, their strong love of family, and their deep caring for the mystery and beauty of creation.

In the early days of the war with the help of Quaker relief workers and the writer Herbert Butler, the Strunz family found a safe haven in Ireland. George attended a Quaker boarding school and always valued his association with the Religious Society of Friends. He was a valued member of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting. He contributed the following thoughts to a book by three Friends entitled *Paths of Faith in the Landscape of Science*:

A personal, supernatural, theistic God no longer has a place in my belief system. This said, I share the widespread experience of feeling a sense of profound reverence and awe in the presence of great beauty in Nature or human endeavour. Thus, looking upwards at a starry sky or a spectacular cloud formation, enjoying the chatter and sparkle of a brook or the sibilant pounding of ocean surf on a beach, walking in the forest, exploring a backwater in my kayak, looking in a museum at an original Monet painting or listening to a great musical work by my favourite composers - Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven - can all become "spiritual experiences" for me. As a young man, walking or climbing or simply being in the midst of hills or mountains had a special capacity to produce in me a feeling of being at peace and in harmony with the Universe. The Psalmist wrote "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." (Psalm 72:3)

Together George and Annette drew great strength from the beauty that surrounded them and fed their souls. The thirteenth century mystic Meister Eckhart once said, "If the only prayer you ever pray is thank you, it is enough." Their home in Queenstown was an oasis of peace and beauty. The path they created to the lake with its many trees and flowering bulbs was a work of art and an act of thanksgiving.

The poet Mary Oliver captures this spirit in the following lines:

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?*

We give thanks to God for the life and witness of these dear Friends.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Kenneth “Gordon” Thompson

1950 - 2022

Gordon was born August 26, 1950 and died January 14, 2022, age 71. His early years were spent mainly in Belleville, Ontario and he attended high school in Bramalea, Ontario. He had three, younger brothers. He obtained a certificate in business management from the Rotman School of Business at the University of Toronto. He worked for the vast majority of his career in technical sales at Klockner Moeller (and its successor firms) selling high voltage control systems that nuclear power plants (CANDU reactors) used. He retired in 2018. His job involved international travel which Gordon relished.

While in Belleville his family attended the Baptist church. Gordon had an early interest in paleontology (he collected fossils) and archaeology and the story in Genesis he was told at church was missing the history of the world he was beginning to appreciate. Through the Royal Ontario Museum, he volunteered at some archeological digs. It was at a pottery dig that he met David Newlands. David introduced him to Quakers.

Gordon's interests were wide ranging. He loved hiking the Bruce Trail and the contact with the natural world that it enabled. As an extension of this he loved canoe camping, backpacking, cross country skiing, and closer to home, gardening. Nature was a place that was a spiritually nurturing experience for Gordon. He contributed to the Toronto chapter of the Bruce Trail. He also loved Israeli folk dancing.

Through his contact with David Newlands, he began to attend Yonge Street Meeting. He attended meeting for worship in the 1812 meeting house before the renovations in 1975. This gave him a sense of how the early Ontario Quakers worshiped. Gordon was a seeker and he was looking for a Christ centered Quaker meeting. Canadian Quakers were against nuclear power and this was difficult for Gordon to reconcile with his work.

Gordon along with others from Yonge Street Meeting, attended on several occasions Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) in Barnesville, Ohio. Ohio Yearly Meeting has “un-programmed, Christ centered meetings, where they wait in silence with expectancy to hear our Lord through the Holy Spirit to speak to them. Often they are moved to share with those present the words that they are given”. This form of Quakerism appealed to Gordon.

Ohio Yearly Meeting has a category of membership called affiliate membership for those who believe in the message of Conservative Friends but have a sense of spiritual isolation due to physical distance. Gordon joined in 2017 the Seekers' Haven Worship Group in Cleveland, Ohio. Again, due to distance, Gordon was not able to worship on a regular basis with this worship group.

Gordon suffered from slow onset deteriorating vision and thus was unable to drive. Toronto Meeting was easier to attend than Yonge Street Meeting.

Gordon was very generous with his spirit, his knowledge, his labour, his money, and his vision with whatever he was interested and involved in. His quiet sense of humour was a happy contribution to the work.

Once Gordon was introduced to the Canadian Friends Historical Association (CFHA) he became very involved. He understood the importance of the mandate of CFHA to work to preserve and communicate the on-going history and faith of Friends in Canada and their contribution to the Canadian experience. He understood that the wider community of historians, descendants, and those wishing to broaden their knowledge of Quakers in Canada would be interested in the work of CFHA. It enabled those of like mind to work in a spirit of close fellowship and mutual enrichment. CFHA operational model was based on a Quaker meeting for worship with attention to business. Gordon believed that the lived experience of the early Quakers in Canada was a model of how we could live in the present day. It is not merely of historical interest but is a lesson in how we may find solutions for how to live today. He read widely especially Quaker material. He also wrote and contributed to the newsletter and The Quaker History Journal of CFHA.

Gordon dedicated himself to CFHA and was a driving force as chairperson. He moved the organization forward with a website and digitalization of newsletters, The Journal, and transcriptions of old minutes and documents. He helped to organize tours of Quaker historical sites and talks at the AGM. Gordon recognized that the mandate of CFHA was also to communicate the faith of Quakers and in the last two years he organized Friendly Fridays online where the *Journal of George Fox* (John L. Nickalls edition) is read and discussed. This is continuing after his death.

Gordon wrote poetry in the form of haiku:

*Spirit wind bloweth
Bearing ancestral wisdom
Bid thy heart take heed*