

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends – Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuhauwiri

March 2022

Spiritual Thought

We need to respect, revere and cooperate with other life systems on our planet. The earth's diverse riches are not ours to exploit. Seek reverence for life and a sense of wonder at God's continuing presence in all of creation.

E14 Advices & Queries, 2013

News of and for Friends

Lawrence and Marie were due to return to NZ last week. We expect they are safely ensconced with family in Auckland and will return to Nelson in a couple of weeks.

Joanna is back in Nelson. She had spent several weeks at the protest at Parliament.

John L is back home from hospital but is still unwell and in some pain. He is keen for visitors.

Christine, Jan, and Peter are pleased to have workshopped their workshop "Climate Conversations" with Friends on Sunday 20th March. There was positive feedback from the small group who attended in person and by Zoom, and some learning. Their next step is to find small groups of friends, family, workplaces, organisations willing to host the 90 minute workshop. Let them know if you can bring a small group together.

Linda from Motueka Worship group succumbed to Covid-19. She described the first 72 hours as like being run over by a 10 tonne truck. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Lizi has indicated her wish to gift the graphic she created as a potential logo for the Society of Friends to Nelson Meeting. If her gift is accepted at the next Business Meeting, we can all brainstorm how to use it to represent Quakers in Nelson.

DIARY OF EVENTS:

Daily Global Zoom Meeting for Worship, 9.00 am each day for one hour, to hold in the Light the situation in Ukraine,

the decision makers, the soldiers, the citizens - all the people whose lives are in danger and already disrupted by fear. The meeting has been organised by Friends House Moscow supporters in the USA.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4165005614?pwd=NUtieEtqbDBYbjBrcGdMMzBKQ3drQT09> Meeting ID: 416 500 5614 Passcode: 182805

Tuesday 22 March 5am, online, "Apartheid South Africa – Apartheid Israel", Interview with Brian Brown. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlf-GorD4pHdXMyIfqMFsYDady2XRBJVtY>

Wednesday 30 March 7:30pm - 8:30 pm online 46th Land Day Commemoration Event NZ, speeches, cultural content, and poetry, brought to you by Palestinian Youth Aotearoa and Justice for Palestine. Land Day, on the 30th of March, marks a turning point as the first mass mobilization by Palestinians within Israel against internal colonialism and land theft. https://www.facebook.com/events/406575934565271/?active_tab=about

Sunday April 3rd 12 noon Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St.: Meeting for Worship for Business. No vaccine pass required. Zoom participation.

Wednesday April 6th 7pm Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St.: Becoming Friends, sharing spiritual journeys. No vaccine pass required. Raewyn to facilitate. All welcome

Sunday April 10th 10am Decks Reserve, Motueka: Monthly Motueka Meeting for Worship. All welcome.

Wednesday April 20th, Home Discussion Group. Topic and Venue to be advised. All welcome

Deadline for next Newsletter

Our Newsletter is a way to share our lives – to help build our Quaker community. Thanks to everyone who has sent contributions. Please consider sending in your news, a book review, a quote that speaks to you.... Send newsletter items to Elizabeth Dooley at elizdooley@hotmail.com. The cut-off date for items for the April newsletter is Friday, April 8th, 2022.

A Climate Conversation. Meeting for Learning Sunday 20th March.

We were a small group who gathered at the Meeting House in person and by Zoom, but enough of us to have a hopeful, positive conversation that nonetheless made room for the despair, grief, and loss of hope that some feel about the prospect for humanity on a degraded planet. Recognising that action, especially collective action, whether it is informing ourselves, reading the science or taking climate action initiatives is the best antidote to despair we ended on a high note.

The workshop started with Peter asking us to do some thinking and writing on the things we value in ourselves, and then the things we value in the external world. We shared that with each other. There were common themes of the importance of our love for our family and friends and of the natural world - the vast variety of species from the least to the most complex.

This led naturally into the question: what or who that we love is in danger from environmental breakdown. Mentioned were the very viability of humanity because of hormonal and deliberate attacks on human fertility, chemical overload on the planet, including the use of synthetic fertilizers, the great extinction of species and our grandchildren's loss of biodiversity, among others of equal significance.

This led us into the question, what more can you do to help reduce that threat, along a continuum from talking to others about climate change to taking political action. We started this part of the conversation by imagining the future we wish for, and then choosing one thing we could commit to do from here. Our choices reflect the considerable effective action Friends are already taking as well as our personalities. One is going to further her reading; several are going to talk to their book club and singing groups to see if we can set up further community based Climate Conversations.

Peter provided information on the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum along with copies of their Climate Action Book which focuses on individual actions and told us about a coming political action a Forum member is organising, to send postcards to MPs at the time that the Climate Commission releases its next Report, urging them to act on the Climate Emergency and offering support for them to do so. In future conversations we will also provide lists of local, national, and international organisations people can join and support.

A workshop was held on this topic a year ago. Its repeated as a timely reminder to us all.

We talked about the difference between meditation and Meeting for Worship, especially in that, while meditation techniques might be useful for centring, they are not the goal. In Meeting for Worship, we are waiting for the voice of God from within or without, a sense of Spirit or insight, depending on how each Friend experiences it.

A very apt question about 'promptings' led to fruitful discussion of the ways in which Friends might feel the urge to minister. It was explained by one Friend as like the feeling you get when a group are taking turns to speak and as it goes round the room, getting closer and closer, your heart begins to beat faster, and you might feel your breath tighten. The prompting to ministry is like that feeling of 'it's my turn to speak'. Others noted they first think 'no, I don't want to say this' before feeling 'but I must', while others who have not felt any particular sensation wondered whether ministry was perhaps not for them.

The form ministry could take is not restricted just to words – song, perhaps dance, a reading, the overall behaviour of the meeting, even a joke could be ministry. We wondered whether some Friends speak in tongues and whether that would communicate sufficiently to be considered ministry.

We pondered the distinction between standing to speak about something personal and having a message for the Meeting as whole and concluded that it comes down to intention – is it to gain sympathy or express irritation or is from our Higher Self or the Spirit and meant for the benefit of others?

The context in which Quaker practice developed is noted. We are given guidelines, not rules because 'the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life'*. At the time of George Fox and the early Quakers it was very clear that religious rules had been used to torture and kill and Friends wanted to get away from that.

Reflections, sometimes called 'almost ministry' occurs after Meeting when Friends talk briefly about what has been on their minds. We felt this was more informal, 'down a cog' from Meeting for Worship, and gave an opportunity to get to know each other 'in the Spirit' and even to practice giving ministry. Not every Meeting has a reflection time and not everyone likes the practice but in Nelson we have done this for many years and mostly feel the benefit. We were divided over whether it was a time to open a discussion or whether each reflection should be separate as with creative listening.

When it came to vigils, such as on the Church Steps to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki and ANZAC day, there was a strong case made for these to be silent. Not everyone agreed, as a vigil is about bearing witness and is not inherently silent, but it was noted that laughing and chatting detracts from the solemnity of the occasion. We will discuss this further when preparing for the next vigil and will need to consider how to involve non-Quakers who join these vigils.

*from the introduction to Advices and Queries by the elders at Balby, Yorkshire 1656

The Ice cream Man.

By Michael Longley

Rum and raisin, vanilla, butter-scotch,
walnut, peach:
You would rhyme off the flavours. That
was before
They murdered the ice-cream man on
the Lisburn Road
And you bought carnations to lay
outside his shop.
I named for you all the wild flowers of
the Burren

I had seen in one day: thyme, valerian,
loosestrife,
Meadowsweet, tway blade, crowfoot,
ling, angelica,
Herb robert, marjoram, cow parsley,
sundew, vetch,
Mountain avens, wood sage, ragged
robin, stitchwort,
Yarrow, lady's bedstraw, bindweed, bog
pimpernel.

One of the most understated, powerful anti-war poems ever written, "The Ice Cream Man" is bracketed by two lists: the first in a child's voice, filled with delight and anticipation, and the second in Longley's voice, reciting for the child another list of marvels. Between these two lists is an act of war in Northern Ireland, the murder of an ice cream man, a senseless loss of life the child seeks to honour with a gift.

As the lives of Ukrainians continue to be shattered in ways large and small, such poems can help us witness to war's insanity, mourn what is lost, and hope for the peace we pray will come.

The poem's closing list of wildflowers is heart breaking, defiant, haunting, and heartening. Is it meant to take the child's mind off the murder? To gently distract from how the tendrils of war creep into everyday life, brutal and indifferent? Or is the list a form of consolation, a way of insisting that the world is nevertheless a place of abundant beauty, for those willing to seek it out? Or is it an indictment of the appalling wastefulness of war itself, the foolish, grotesque way it turns its back on life and runs toward ruin? Or is it all of these things, and more?

Listen to Longley read the poem [here](#).

Michael Longley is the author of more than 20 books of poetry. He served as professor of poetry for Ireland from 2007 to 2010, and has received the T.S. Eliot Prize, the Hawthornden Prize, the Griffin Poetry Prize — and in 2015, was honoured with the Freedom of the City of Belfast.
Salt Project.

Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa put out an excellent monthly newsletter. You can sign up for it here: Secretary@PSNA.nz

Quakers Aotearoa Website

<https://quakers.nz/> is the database for the New Zealand Religious Society of Friends. It is a useful source of information on people and events. Please get into the habit of referring to the database, and please make sure your details are entered and up to date. This database is the safest, most secure database in New Zealand. If you don't want to make your entry yourself, Elizabeth will do it for you, but please consider the poor administrators trying to make sure everyone is informed and consulted and add your phone number.

Online Resources: as well as our own website quakers-in-nelson.org.nz, the national website quakers.nz and our Face Book page **Nelson quakers:** There are several FB Quaker pages to browse. One you might like is found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2207263944>

Our Programme: below is a reminder of the different activities each month.

First Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 9.00–10.00am vaccine pass required
Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.30 – 11.30am No vaccine pass required
Wednesday: Becoming Friends, 7.00 pm – 8.45pm
No vaccine pass required

(Alternate Even Months) Sunday: Business Meeting 12.00 pm No vaccine pass required, Zoom participation.

Second Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 9.00–10.00am vaccine pass required
Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.30 – 11.30am No vaccine pass required

Third Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 9.00–10.00am vaccine pass required
Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.30 – 11.30am No vaccine pass required
Wednesday: Home Discussions, 7.00 pm – 9.00pm
host decides if vaccine pass required.

Fourth Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 9.00–10.00am vaccine pass required
Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.30 – 11.30am No vaccine pass required
Children are welcome at all Meetings for Worship.
Activities will be provided for them.