



St. Lawrence Regional Gathering

June 18-19, 2021

For the Love of Rivers

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87253625631?pwd=RzkYeWJHT3FWekdGOVZaQlJ6ZmpxZz09>

Meeting ID: 872 5362 5631, Passcode: 447554

Main Program

Friday, June 18

7-8:30 pm – Short videos on spiritual connections with rivers and watersheds followed by worship sharing

Saturday, June 19

10-10:30 am – Welcome and opening worship

10:30 am-noon – Invited speakers on rights of rivers, the role of Indigenous peoples and other issues in the St. Lawrence/Ottawa rivers watershed followed by Q&A and worship sharing

12-12:30 pm – Lunch break

12:30-2 pm – Spiritual creativity and contemplation: Meditative walk and sharing of reflections, photos, poems, memories or other creations about rivers and water, followed by worship sharing

2-2:30 pm – Business meeting and closing worship

**“The sun shines not on us but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us.” –
John Muir**

RSVP in advance if you plan to attend: clerk@stlawrence.quaker.ca or via <https://stlawrence.quaker.ca/contact>. The Children's Program organizers are particularly in need of knowing how many children will attend, and their ages. Updates prior to June 18 will be posted at https://stlawrence.quaker.ca/next_rg_program

FOR THE LOVE OF RIVERS: MEDITATIVE WALK and CREATIVE ACTION

From 12:30 to 2 PM on June 19, Friends are offered the opportunity to take a meditative walk, or express their insights and feelings about Love for Rivers in any kind of creative activity (drawing; creating music; writing poetry; etc.). We will meet together at 12:30 on Zoom to announce our intentions to one another and listen to a few inspirational readings. From 12:45 to 1:30, we will walk or create (each on our own). At 1:30, we will gather in the Zoom session for Worship Sharing.

The following suggestions will help you prepare for a meditative walk.

Many of us move from one place to another without really paying attention to our own bodies in motion, or to the world around us, whether in our own homes or outside in city or country. We may be lost in daydreams, worry, mental shopping lists, or plans for the future. We are not in the habit of making a deliberate, sacred act of living in the present moment. By stopping and listening, looking, and feeling, we can come alive to the sacred beauty and newness in the world. Our bodies as they move in the sacred space of the present are also miraculous, and worthy of our full attention. Focusing in this way, we can become aware of the divine in ordinary, mundane things. To plan your contemplative walk, consider the following possibilities.

1. Choose the location for your walk before the exercise begins. In the context of this Regional Gathering, you may wish to choose a path which leads you to or beside water. This contemplative exercise works in both city and country locations. To participate, you must have a Zoom connection for the opening and closing; you can choose to do this on your phone if you want to locate your walk away from computer access.
2. During the walk, move slowly and deliberately, tuning in to all five senses. Allow yourself to become aware of light, reflections on water, soundscapes typical of running water, the warmth of the sun, the touch of the air, the feel of your clothing, the colours and sounds around you.
3. Stop thinking and just be. Be totally present to what comes your way. If you are in the city, allow the swirl of human life to pass you lightly; float above, alongside. In the country, let the big picture catch you up. Open your heart.
4. Begin to notice greater detail in the patterns of the world outside your head: shapes, thickness, contrasts, reflections and the way things relate. Next to water, consider its opacity and transparency, its surface and its depths, its fluid energy, its source and destination.
5. Be aware of your body, your shifting balance, small aches and pains, muscles stretching, the pleasure of your stride.
6. Touch and feel the textures and shapes of things around you. Off with the shoes if it's possible. Place a hand in the water, or wade in. Some of us hug trees at this point.
7. Listen consciously to sounds near and distant. Listen to your own footsteps, the rustle of your clothing, your breathing.
8. Begin to use your sense of smell more acutely. Smell the scents of earth, the odor of growing or dying plants, humidity, of traffic and industry, as they come to you. Check in on the changing scent scape as you move.
9. If there are people or animals around you, notice them, their expressions, the way they move or hold themselves. Simply be aware of them.
10. Let us be thankful. For the life within, and the life around us. For the gift of water, the natural element from which we come and which sustains our lives in countless ways.



Children's Program

We propose using the theme of water and rivers, and basing the program on *Earthcare for Children: a First Day School Curriculum*, which we have used for our children's program at PMM, and supplementing it with YouTube videos, online games, pictures and songs.

The program would address water and how essential it is for all creation; how to keep water available to meet the needs of people, animals and plants; water use, waste, water conservation, water ceremonies.

We also suggest having a short separate section on animals – pets children may be taking care of, experiences with wild animals or birds. We will use a mix of questions, finish a story, online games, YouTube videos, including the song “I’ve Got Peace Like a River” which the children can sing along to.

We have someone with technical expertise who will be able to set up screen sharing and/or break-out rooms.

Please let us know of children who will attend and their ages, by RSVP to clerk@stlawrence.quaker.ca. Once we know the ages of the children involved and how many we can outline the program in more detail. All activities we are considering can easily be adapted both for young children and teens.

- Peterborough Monthly Meeting