



## Montreal Monthly Meeting Newsletter

### Infolettre de l'Assemblée quaker de Montréal



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The pre-summer months of May and June were at times disappointingly cold this year, and yet June was a time when some flowers also extended their blooming period. Our Meeting was also active and in Montreal, attendance fluctuated interestingly. The numbers were fairly constant but as students labored over essays or prepared for exams, as some people took holidays, so too attended Meetings elsewhere, thus the population shifted. We welcomed back those people who had not seen us for a long time, and missed those others who were responsibilities to them, away.

During this period we had potluck meals, ate across the street to Stavney Park for tea and after meeting, held metaphoric hands as younger members agonized over program choices and future plans, attended one beautiful celebration of life as Paul Sanchez was remembered by family, friends and colleagues, and joined in the ever-refreshing silence of our worship.

We are aware of the storms and tragedies unfolding around us. At times the storms cut us off from family and stress our relationships. Our own country is, like many others, under severe economic threat. We bring sadness and anxiety with to Meeting.

Without trivializing the seriousness of the times, moments together do offer a respite and moments of joy. For this we have been thankful.

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**New Initiative : Worship-Sharing Group in French**

By Vincent Bezaït

On Thursday, May 26, 2025, a small group of Quaker friends met on Zoom for a worship-sharing on a text. The idea was simple: share our worship on a text that had been distributed to everyone. This new format decided to repeat the experience the fourth Thursday each month. The initiative was an outcome of discussions among Friends in the region around Québec City. We recognized that we have not had occasions to exchange our understandings of Quakerism other than at monthly meetings. This inspired to found the new group.

The worship-sharing format was agreed to quickly. Through reading a shared text and expressing our reactions, we would find it easier to reflect and express ourselves on themes related to spirituality and what Quakers would allow us to address a variety of subjects by varying the texts. For the first meeting, the text proposed by Gilles Harvey focused on the relationship of Quakers to silence.

The meeting unfolded naturally. Each of us took a turn freely expressing what the text had inspired in us. In recognition of Quaker practice, we took turns in the intervention would be followed by moments of silence. The shared silence encouraged listening and reflection.

If you wish to join us for this lovely collective experience, don't hesitate to communicate with us so that your name can be added to the mailing list for the monthly text. We are also looking for suggestions for texts in French. All help is welcome, because most Quaker literature is in English.

"This was the first part of a text by Cyril Selzer, "Silent Meeting, A Wonder to the World": Les premiers quakers et le bruit du monde."

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**Saba and Geoff share on the Pilgrimage for the Planet**

By Geoff Garver

This article is a follow-up to the first part published in April, about the workshop "Introduction to the Quaker Way," organized by the Assemblée régionale de la région de Québec.

The workshop was the first module of the program. By the publication date of this newsletter I had not yet attended the fifth module, on the subject of discernment. As promised here is my experience of the final module.

This Workshop As a Whole Brought to Me: The workshop offered last spring by the Assembly of Quakers in France allowed me to discover the origins of this religious movement, and also its basic principles, values and concepts. As I wrote in April, I particularly appreciated having someone give my week-long mystery of English. When I received the most from the exchanges on Quaker principles, summarized under the acronym SPICES—Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship—I understood that these principles were not a creed to follow, but natural outcomes of listening to the inner voice, or Light which inhabits us.

What I Understand about Quaker Discernment: In the fifth session, the theme of discernment opened up a new perspective. Until then, I had understood discernment to be a rational process of weighing options before making a decision. But for Quakers, discernment represents a more profound concept: it is founded on patient and trusting inner listening, as one aims to make the best decisions and to do good—for oneself, for others, for the community. I understood that one aspect of discernment indeed consists of a rational evaluation as one weighs the advantages and difficulties associated with a decision, but it goes further. We are invited to look within, to turn to the small inner voice for guidance in the present moment, and this without regard to our personal perspective. Asking to be supported in our discernment is daring to ask, "God, what do you want me to do now?" Discernment is a commitment to listen, to listen to God, to let go, and to abandon the self with complete trust.

Two months later...  
I continue to mull over what I learned. Discernment, as experienced by Quakers, now mirrors my search for meaning. It is a self-abandonment which trusts in the small interior voice, the voice which gently guides us to what is right. I will end by quoting Water Hjeti Sullivan (Greene Street Meeting, Philadelphia, PA).

"For me, discernment is the fundamental process of Quakerism. It's what we need to do, and what our faith supports. It is how we travel cross the complexity of life and find the kernel, the root, the way: the way for me, today, at this moment. It is how to distinguish the small, gentle voice which guides me well from all the other voices, the multitude of beautiful human voices, which reside in me."

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**Quakers at Large**

By Wendy Sturton

A few months ago, a friend went exploring the little shelf which holds Montreal's Quaker group which worships every week in their new house situated just beyond the city limits, close to the RER Genthimont commuter train station. It is a beautiful place in a quiet neighborhood, with a small garden. I was received with warmth and friendship. The group was made up of about fifteen people from many different backgrounds, and hence provided insight into the importance of respecting pronouns and names, along with some suggestions for what Quaker Meetings can do to improve their gender equality.

During this wrap-up session, several people were unsure about their gender identity and chose to be silent. In future, we will try to make it clear that the gender queer "label" includes those who are questioning their identity as well.

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**Canadian Quaker Poetry Booklet — A Call for Help!**

By Sascha Morgan

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**The Spirit of the Child, by David Hay and Rebecca Nye**

By Geoffreyen Edwards

This book presents an in-depth study of spiritual experiences as described by British children, one of the first kind. Interviews with British children with varying backgrounds from five to eleven, and from a range of classes, ethnic groups and religious backgrounds are presented. This is a remarkable feature of the book, as it is not only a study of children, but also an analysis of their spirituality.

One of the remarkable features of the book is the way it presents the spiritualities of children in a way that is accessible to adults. The book is a valuable resource for parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children.

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Two aspects of this podcast, "The Illiberalism of the Left," link into what I worth it. Ezra Klein is a probing interviewer, and Sarah McBride, only trans person in the US Congress, is firmly fixed in trans rights advocacy. Both of them are articulate and compelling speakers, and their conversation is both informative and inspiring.

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