



Montreal Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Infolettre de l'Assemblée quaker de Montréal

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Life of the Meeting / La vie de l'assemblée

The sober weather of November has descended on us, bringing snow squalls, grey skies and early sunsets. Quakers in Quebec City, Montreal and elsewhere in the province are warmed by our worship, our friendships with one another and by various heartfelt projects in winter months to come.

At our recent Meeting for Worship for Business on October 30, Friends were delighted to confirm the nomination of Geoff Garver as our new co-clerk in Montreal. Jean-Louis Demers continues to play the role of co-clerk ministering to francophone Friends across Quebec. Existing clerk Janeette Fraser was nominated to become Mentoring Clerk. We continue to search for an Assistant Clerk to support our co-clerks.

In the next edition of the Newsletter, we plan to introduce Geoff. His experience in leadership of the Quaker Institute for the Future and his university career in issues related to our Quaker values are sure to enrich our meeting.

A potluck will be held after meeting on November 19 at the Greene Centre in Montreal. All are invited to participate with their savory or sweet contributions and a healthy appetite. We know from past experience that food and company will nourish body and soul.

An appeal letter for contributions to balance 2023 disbursements with donations has been sent out recently. To see the letter and the needs it outlines, you can click [here](#).

Leigh Smit has expressed a leading role to organize a First Day School. At the October 30 Business Meeting, Friends were very positive about this news, and in particular Emma McKay, David Summerhays and Geoffreyjen Edwards volunteered to work with Leigh on this project. Friends who know about resources that would help in the work are invited to [contact Leigh](#) so that the committee can consider them.

A group of francophone Quakers from Quebec City travelled to the Saguenay to visit isolated Friend Jean Duplain (see his article in the October newsletter). This visit strengthened the ties of friendship and reminded us how powerfully the Spirit works through us even when the nearest meeting is distant. More information on this from Jean Louis Demers below.

At Business Meeting on October 30, we discussed next steps for us to take in our reflection on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Emma McKay expressed willingness to organize a worship sharing session on the topic. Friends asked them to organize a worship sharing meeting, to be potentially followed by a vigil.

Three Friends attended a Peace Vigil for the war in Israel and Palestine at the Anglican Cathedral in Quebec City on the evening of November 4. Present were officials and believers of the Christian, Moslem and Jewish communities. More about this experience below.

In recent months, two attenders at our Quebec City meeting applied to become members of MMM. In November our Meeting organized the next step in this process, a Clearness Committee, which is a uniquely Quaker rite of passage to Membership. In this Committee, a few Friends assemble to ask questions of the person who wishes to become a member. This meeting is in no way a "test", but an aid to the applicant in clarifying his/her/their desire to be a Quaker. These meetings generate joy as a new Friend steps closer into our loving circle. Two such meetings in one month are a rare privilege for our meeting. More about the most recent meeting below.

Hosts and greeters welcome us all to Meeting, and facilitate our silent worship. A greeter at the door has the joyful task of welcoming newcomers. Please consider signing up to be either a host or a greeter. The signup sheet for both is [here](#). When you arrive at the signup sheet you will find simple instructions about how to play a supporting role.

My minute of introduction is much appreciated and a printed copy returned to me with a reply, carefully written out in English, and signed by the Clerk. The reply states "It was wonderful to have you at our meeting." They then organise a lunch, with rice patties, yogurt, and potato salad and fresh persimmons provided by one of the members. The persimmons come from his own tree. After lunch, they are having their Meeting for Worship, so we sit together. Silence was also there, that silence which is so dear to us and which within itself holds all the peace in this world. It is sad that the publicity for this event was not enough to inform and gather a larger crowd. But something tells me that this will not be the last vigil of the year...

Time to Learn / Formations

To find out how to apply to M & C for financial assistance with paying for a course, email Montreal Quaker Meeting (info@montreal.quaker.ca)

What is Quaker Faith and Practice?
 Hosted by Woodbrooke on November 29, Wednesday, 7 pm UK (2 pm EST), on Zoom and free, but limited number of places. The workshop examines the history and purpose of books of discipline - given this is an area on which there has been discussion in Montreal and Quebec, this course may be of interest to some of us. Places will be limited. To register, follow this [link](#).

An Introduction to the History of Quakers in Canada

This talk is hosted by Winnipeg Monthly Meeting and facilitated by longtime Canadian Quaker Elaine Bishop on November 30 at 8 pm EST.

If you would like to attend this event, please [e-mail Glenn](mailto:Glenn) to signal your attendance and to receive the link ahead of time.

Pendle Hill online: Clearness Committees: An Introduction to Spiritual Discernment in Community for Personal and Social Transformation, Dec 4, 2023, A First Monday Lecture with Valerie Brown and John Baird, 7:30pm - 9pm Eastern Time (US & Canada) via Zoom. Free to the public! Registration required. To register, click [here](#)

Joint CYM-Woodbrooke Workshop: Renewing Quaker Community. Led by UK Woodbrooke Quaker Studies tutor and author Ben Pink Dandelion, this workshop organized by CYM will encourage exploration of memories around Quaker communities, and ideas for renewal in a time of great change. The course costs \$50. It is scheduled at 12 pm local EST on January 13, February 17, March 16 and April 20. For more information and to register click [here](#).

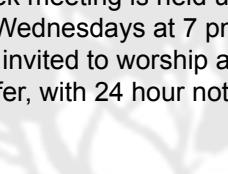


Quakers at Large

A Trip to the Saguenay
 By Jean-Louis Demers

On a recent Saturday Geoffreyjen, Caroline, Sébastien and Jean-Louis drove north through drizzling fog towards the city of Saguenay. This is the home city of Jean, an isolated friend and regular participant in our meetings from their very beginning. Two hours by car, two hours of gloomy weather during which our hearts were joyful. When we arrived at our destination we were warmly welcomed by Jean in the offices of the cooperative [Système T](#) which he co-founded with friends. Jean proud of this, and with good reason. His objective: to help industries work through an ecological transition. What a huge effort is being poured into this project! A very moving photo exposition is being held here, and we took the time to study it.

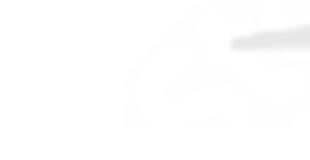
After a pleasant lunch in a restaurant we visited the Old Pulp Mill Museum. In addition to its permanent exhibition, it displayed [news photos](#) which revealed people's suffering, suffering which was at times unexpected to us. This led us to reflect on counteractions that could be taken. We then embarked on a serious discussion on actions by francophone Quakers to fight for a just cause yet to be determined. Mid-afternoon we returned to Quebec City in bright sunlight, feeling weary but satisfied, the kind that feeds the soul because it is a sign of mutual, cherished friendship.



Peace Vigil in Québec City

By Jean-Louis Demers

A vigil for peace was held on November 5 in Québec City, organized by the Jewish, Islamic and Christian communities of the city. The event was held at the Anglican Cathedral of Québec, the same church which graciously allowed us to hold our first Quaker worship meetings in its chapel. Three Quaker Friends were present that evening. For a full hour, representatives of each community shared spoken texts, songs and music. It was beautiful to see the gathering of representatives of groups who are in armed conflict elsewhere. It is truly possible! The atmosphere was very spiritual and emphasized the pacifist character of great religious texts. Emotion stole into our hearts as we sat together. Silence was also there, that silence which is so dear to us and which within itself holds all the peace in this world. It is sad that the publicity for this event was not enough to inform and gather a larger crowd. But something tells me that this will not be the last vigil of the year...



A Quaker in Japan

Notes from my Diary, 14 and 15 October 2023

By Geoffreyjen Edwards

On the Saturday, I arrive at my hotel too early to take my room. So I decide to find the way to the Quaker Meeting House which I will need tomorrow. By cutting up an alleyway behind the buildings, I stumble across a gorgeous Shinto Temple, so peaceful surrounded by the noise of Tokyo. It is the Saikai-Ji Temple. Then up steep stairs reminding me of my home to the street above where the Quaker Meeting House is a little further along.

The garden is teeming with people, cutting the hedge, cleaning up the lawn, raking, gathering twigs and leaves. It is the parents of the children from the nearby Quaker school. Koriko gives me a quick tour of the building. The meeting room itself has benches in a half circle arrangement. There is a group of children in there being taught to sing. I offer to help with the garden, it looks so inviting, but I am told that there are 31 helpers, and I can see the leader is a bit frazzled by managing everyone, so I decide not to overstay. Mid-afternoon we returned to Quebec City in bright sunlight, feeling weary but satisfied, the kind that feeds the soul because it is a sign of mutual, cherished friendship.

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