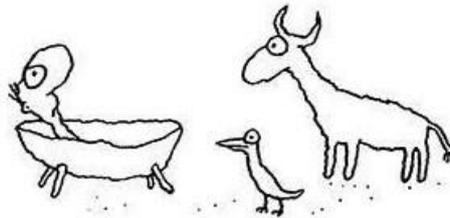


# Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

## Christmas 2020



### Love is Born (see below)

### Meetings for Worship

Meeting for Worship will continue by Zoom every Sunday from 10.30 to 11.30, simultaneously with Friends in the Meeting House, outside or holding the silence at home.

Twelve of us had a powerful Meeting by Zoom on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The opening Ministry was from **Michael Wade**, about how much differences had been on his mind, and sharing the prayer of St Francis – a favourite of many of us, and it was good to hear it in full.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

**Jon Knight** spoke movingly about the potential conflict between the Quaker testimonies to peace and truth. In the current situation he is beginning to feel that truth (speaking truth to power) has the edge over peace. He read the quote from Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife in Brazil was also read:

When I feed the poor, they call me a saint, but when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist.

**Gren Gaskell** spoke about Joseph, an ordinary person who accepted what he was given and the contradiction he found when he chanced upon a 'high church' celebration at Cathedral where he is the patron saint.

**Peter Goillau** shared a poem below by Michael Leunig, an Australian cartoonist, philosopher, poet and national treasure.

**Love is born**

With a dark and troubled face  
When hope is dead  
And in the most unlikely place  
Love is born:  
Love is always born.

He discovered this at a Science and Faith talk he went to by Dame Prof Jocelyn Bell-Burnett's. For this and other prayers see: <https://www.leunig.com.au/works/prayers>

At the Meeting House there were six people. **Hugh McMichael** ministered on what Christmas means to him:

I carry with me little excitement from childhood. My early Christmas memories are of pretending to be a loving family.

Then there is the commercialisation of Christmas with which we are all so familiar.

But this is a time of change. Tomorrow, Monday, is the winter solstice. From Tuesday onwards the days begin to lengthen and lead into a time of new growth.

So what about December 25<sup>th</sup> ? There is nothing special about that date – we have little idea of when Jesus was born – but it is as good a date to celebrate his arrival as any other. And it is a special date for me personally. I was attending a midnight

mass about 20 years ago and decided spontaneously to take communion after 31 years away from all religion. Spirituality came back into my life.

And Jesus had a lot of good ideas – respecting children, looking after the poor, equality of opportunity and - from my viewpoint especially - caring for prisoners. All good Quaker values! I am happy to celebrate his day on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Judith Badman** read a New-Year Blessing by John O'Donohue's.

On the day when  
The weight deadens  
On your shoulders  
And you stumble,  
May the clay dance  
To balance you.

And when your eyes  
Freeze behind  
The grey window  
And the ghost of loss  
Gets into you,  
May a flock of colours,  
Indigo, red, green  
And azure blue,  
Come to awaken in you  
A meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays  
In the currach of thought  
And a stain of ocean  
Blackens beneath you,  
May there come across the waters  
A path of yellow moonlight  
To bring you safely home.  
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
May the clarity of light be yours,  
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow  
Wind work these words  
Of love around you,  
An invisible cloak  
To mind your life.

In the afterthoughts **Anne Burgh** recited this lovely blessing used in the Anglican Church.

In the tender compassion of our God  
The dawn from on high has broken upon us  
To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death  
And to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Then they got talking about favourite carols, and then decided, as they were so well spaced-out (!!!), to sing a few verses through their masks.

Looking ahead, options for linking the two Meetings in some way are being considered for the New Year.

## Special Collections



**Don't forget December's Special Collection:** Go to <http://peopleinmotion.org.uk/donate/>

Message for those who donated to **November's** collection from Revd Lynne Sparkes, Vicar, St Mary's Pickersleigh

Thank you so much for your kindness and generosity again this year. The families receiving a gift were quite overwhelmed and wanted you to know just how grateful they are. You have helped five families including 14 children, who for various reasons have had an especially difficult year this year.

## Messages from Friends

### From Elizabeth and Kevin Rolph

This has been such a strange year. Here is an extract from our business Christmas card.

*Whilst we agreed with the lockdowns we were sad that they prevented us providing the restorative breaks at The Dell House that were so needed this year. We have been busy though. We spent a lot of time out in the garden and we brought forward the major project of rewiring and redecorating the hall, stairs and landing. We are delighted with the transformation inside and out. We were pleased to be able to share the garden by opening it frequently through the NGS, raising £2,150*

It is our lack of guests that has allowed us to host Meetings for Worship by Zoom. We know how much this has been appreciated and we are glad to be able to give service in this way. We wish you all good health and happiness in 2021.

**From Jill Etheridge**

I wish all Friends at Malvern Quaker Meeting many Christmas Blessings and a healthy and optimistic start to 2021. I do so miss seeing the faces and being in the presence of those who normally come to worship at the Meeting House, but I think of you all often, and look forward to when we can all meet together safely again.

**From Hugh McMichael**

I wish to thank all friends at Malvern LM for the welcome I have received during this past year. I feel attached to you in a way totally new to me. We may have differences but we all aim for a common cause of love and peace in the world. Thank you.

**From Jo Bates**

Here is a carol I arranged back in 2003, the music and chorus lyrics are mine but the verse lyrics were brought to me by Ari Ashley, who was a neighbour when we lived on the Welsh border - she happens to be the daughter-in-law of Laura Ashley.

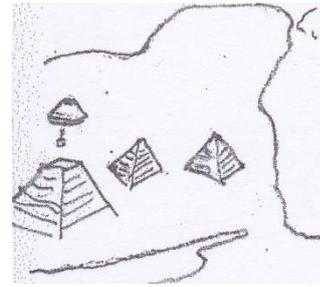
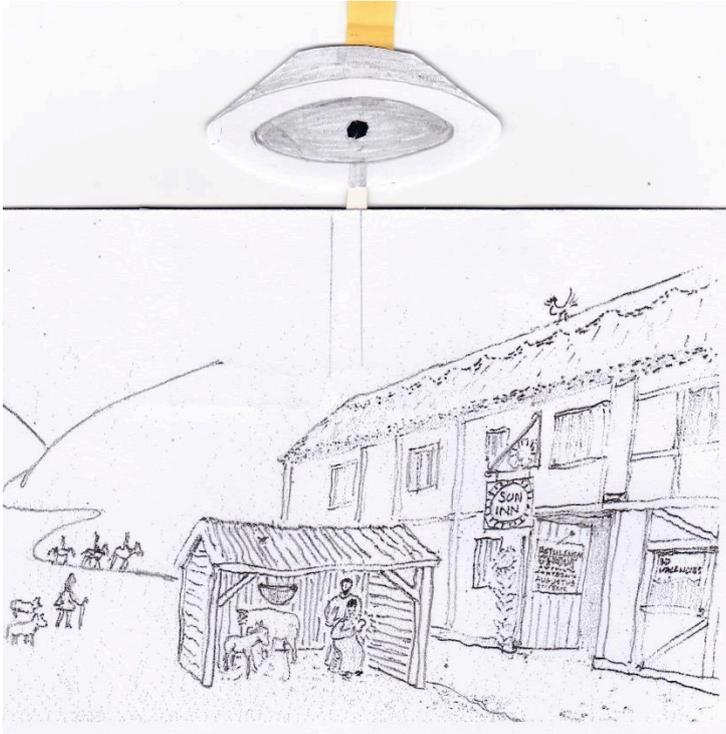
I would just like to offer it so that it might bring comfort and a little cheer to people.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y\\_XP0D4s0oCW1lh1QmQpygCzDZ\\_21lkQ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y_XP0D4s0oCW1lh1QmQpygCzDZ_21lkQ/view?usp=sharing)

**From Richard Beach**

Happy Christmas and Best wishes for 2021 to Malvern Friends.

Richard shared his homemade Christmas card at our Zoom Meeting, and then posted it for me to do the best I could to share it. Above his beautifully drawn picture of an Inn with Mary and Joseph in the stable is some ribbon, and when pulled, a flying saucer appears. On the back is a stone circle and pyramids, with flying saucers above them. There is a page of text explaining the science behind these rotatable discs, or SELIHENGE (System of Engineered Levitation illustrating how Horizontal Energy may neutralize Gravity Efficiently). I'm afraid the science is beyond me!



## **Mon Jan 25 - International day of action on Yemen**

**Melanie Jameson**

Qinetiq have a partnership agreement with Saudi Arabia which is why Dick and I are keen to make them the focus of our local witness on this date. The newly formed CAAT group is also considering this – contact [threecountiescaat@gmail.com](mailto:threecountiescaat@gmail.com) to reach the Local Outreach Coordinator, Kirsten Bayes and Rebecca.

Our thoughts for 25/1/21 are for a vigil around the Barnards Green trees, with explanatory placards, followed by a walk to the Q site on St Andrews Rd.

Once there Dick will make a declaration and lay a wreath, while we support him in silence, with heads bowed.

Further info on the International Day of Action see CND's website <https://cnduk.org/events/international-day-of-action-on-yemen>



# Quaker Peace & Social Witness



**Quaker faith in Action:** Here are extracts from a review of the year. Let me know if you would like more details.

## *In February*

We published [a new introduction to Quaker Peace & Social Witness booklet](#), and an updated resource that introduces [the Quaker peace testimony](#).

## *In March*

Our Inspiring Nonviolence online course ran throughout March and into April even as pandemic restrictions descended on everyone's lives.

## *In April*

We published the latest in our series of toolkits for action, booklets designed to support Quakers as they practice particular skills. The toolkit 'Engaging in conflict, challenging hate' takes a sensitive look at values-based disagreements and how we respond to them in a principled and compassionate manner. The booklet is an invaluable primer for any person negotiating all kinds of conflict, from quarrels over the washing-up to challenging racism in our communities. [Read 'Engaging with conflict, challenging hate' online](#).

Peacebuilding colleagues in Rwanda, Kenya and Burundi found new ways of supporting communities experiencing conflict during lockdown. By moving their in-person work to WhatsApp, they were able to question the globally-circulated misinformation that emerged in the wake of the pandemic.

We were at the forefront of supporting a long-standing legal case to fight government attempts to ban local authorities from passing ethical investment policies. After four years the case finally reached the UK Supreme Court, where judges struck the ban down, affirming the rights of local authorities to make ethical choices in their pension investments.

## *In June*

In the wake of the US police killing of George Floyd, Quakers held or joined local demonstrations in support of Black Lives Matter. From [Bishops Castle](#) in Shropshire to [Portobello beach](#) near Edinburgh and many places besides, Friends expressed solidarity with Black people in Britain and around the world.

We also helped launch the [Build Back Better](#) campaign as part of a Quaker response to the pandemic. [Learn about Quaker involvement in Build Back Better here.](#)

### *In September*

Inspired by QPSW summer series, Turning the Tide East Africa organised its first online gathering, bringing together more than 30 peace activists from Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi.

Our work in Israel and Palestine moved online. We developed a #NoToAnnexation campaign in response to the Israeli government's announcement that they would illegally annex large parts of occupied Palestine.

### *In November*

We teamed up with Global Campaign on Military Spending UK (GCOMS UK) to organise a Twitter action in opposition to the £24 billion increase in UK military spending. Using the hashtag #UKDefundWar, the Twitterstorm reached over 1.3 million accounts, amplifying the voices of those who wish to see military spending redirected into infrastructure that supports peace and wellbeing.

### *In December*

We [went to the Home Office](#) to deliver a Quaker statement on migration to the Home Secretary, Priti Patel. Among other things, the statement read 'we abhor the many forms of violence used in the management of migration and the effect current migration systems have in dividing our human family.' [Read the statement in full.](#) Finally, the Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) has committed more than £200,000 in grants and loans to vital housing projects across 2020. These funds, raised through donations from Quakers, will ensure that people seeking asylum, survivors of domestic abuse, and those recovering from difficulties in their lives will have a safe, decent and affordable home.

## **News from Friends House Moscow – Sliding on Ice**

Go to <https://mailchi.mp/f12ee594082c/fhm-winter-newsletter-2020>

## **Christmas Blessing**

May the blessing of **joy** abide within you  
May the blessing of **peace** rest upon you  
May the blessing of **love** flow out through you  
**May all the blessings of the Lord be yours at Christmas  
and the New Year.**

An anonymous blessing, source: the Quiet Garden Movement