



Malvern Quaker Meeting Newsletter

October 2020



The deadline for next Newsletter is Tuesday 27th October.

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Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship was held in the Meeting House for the first time since March on August 30th. While it was good to be back, numbers were low. The Meeting by Zoom was therefore restarted on 13th September. Trying to bring together the different ways of worship, this is now held from 11.00 to 11.30 and the outdoor Meeting at the same time, outside the Meeting House. Clerks and Elders are keeping this under review and are pleased to receive any comments and thoughts.

About eight have been attending the Meetings for Worship in the Meeting House, although not always the same people. The Meetings have been gathered, and the wearing of facemasks has not significantly detracted from the feeling of the Meeting. Two to five people have been meeting outside the Meeting House.

Around ten people have been attending the Meetings by Zoom, again not always the same people. There has been little spoken Ministry, but the silence has felt gathered. Here are two of the comments made in the afterword on Sunday 20th September:

I felt an energy of love holding us together.

It is a wonderful place of freedom to be in.

On Sunday 13th September Lucy Townson read this, by Matthew Fox:

Julian of Norwich saw all of creation in a tiny hazelnut – and she saw that it was fragile but that it endured because God loved it. God loves all of creation. Can you image a single, loved entity in the palm of your hand? Tiny but immense? Microcosm of the vast macrocosm? All if it loved?

In the afterword on the 27th September I contributed the following
Thinking about contrasts in this current time the words that came to me were a title of one of a poem by my Mother: *You need the darkness to see the stars*. I hope and pray that in these strange times people in the dark will be able to see the stars.



World Quaker Day: October 4th

The theme is: 'What does it mean to be a Quaker today? Living a Faithful Life in a Changing World'.
See <http://www.worldquakerday.org/>

Area Meeting – Saturday 10th October, 10.30, by Zoom

The agenda will include

- review of current arrangements for Meetings for Worship
- Dates for Area Meeting, 2021
- Worcester Grassroots Alliance: an update from Worcester LM on the 'Community Action for a Just Transition' project
- Report from Meeting for Sufferings
- Malvern Peace Education project: a brief update

You will receive the Zoom link, full agenda and reports directly from Colin Billet. Please let me know if you are not getting Area Meeting emails and would like to.

Flashes – a piece from the writings of Pir Elias Amidon, submitted by Ann Burgh

Make a little beauty here and there.
Some kind words will do, or
just love someone from a distance
and don't say anything.

Advices & Queries No 35

Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for the prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.

The Light Within: Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

Contributed by Eoin McCarthy

First gathering in 17th-century England as the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers have always existed on the margins of Christianity, but that doesn't mean their impact has been small. In many ways, they were ahead of their time (and even our times) when it came to women's legitimate place in spiritual leadership, abolitionism, pacifism, and even the necessity of silence to hear the voice of God. From the beginning, they insisted that every

individual had access to the "Light Within" and must follow their own conscience. It took the Catholic Church until Vatican II to state that clearly! In this passage by Quaker mystic Thomas Kelly (1893–1941), I hear echoes of the writings of Thomas Merton, as Kelly encourages his readers to recognize, trust, and live authentically from the "Light Within."

Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continually return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. It is a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us. It is a Light Within that illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the human face. It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it. It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst. Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And [Christ] is within us all.

You who read these words already know this inner Life and Light. For by this very Light within you is your recognition given. In this humanistic age we suppose we are the initiators and God is the responder. But the Living Christ within us is the initiator, and we are the responders. . . .

The basic response of the soul to the Light is internal adoration and joy, thanksgiving and worship, self-surrender and listening. The secret places of the heart cease to be our noisy workshop. They become a holy sanctuary of adoration and of self-oblation, where we are kept in perfect peace, if our minds be stayed on [God] who has found us in the inward springs of our life. . . . Powerfully are the springs of our will moved to an abandon of singing love toward God; powerfully are we moved to a new and overcoming love toward time-blinded human beings and all creation. In this Center of Creation all things are ours, and we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Lyttelton Well Christian Bookshop and Café

Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 10.00am to 3.30.

Please support them. The café is excellent and they have a good stock of calendars, diaries and cards.

Message from Malvern Churches Justice & Peace Group

Week of Prayer for World Peace: October 11th - 18th

There will be no events or booklets this year but you may like to include in your prayers Peace Education, Non-violence, the UN and the ending of WWII, the current Coronavirus Pandemic, the Environment, and Security, Leadership for Reconciliation and Peacemakers.

One World Week: October 18th - 25th

This year's theme is "Its Our World: Let's Make It Better". The Group had been planning to have a United Service at Lansdowne Crescent Methodist Church on Sunday 18th October but this is cancelled.

We hope that "things" will be very different in September/October 2021 and that many of our activities will happen. The "Hiroshima Vigil" in August did take place in the Priory Grounds with a good attendance and much interest from "passers by".

Malvern Meeting House

Quaker and architectural historian Chris Skidmore is putting together a book *Quakers and their meeting houses*. We have provided the photograph from our website. Here is the text:

Another modestly sized meeting house was built in 1937/38 in Malvern and designed by J R Armstrong, one of the Bournville Village Trust architects. The building is in buff brick with a grey tile roof and has the main meeting room parallel to the road with a gabled entrance block under a hipped roof coming forward at one end. The architrave above the double doors has FRIENDS HOUSE in bronze lettering: the doors give onto a lobby with toilets either side, a common feature. The meeting room is of four bays, two casement windows towards the road and three facing to the rear, the bays separated by buttresses. In the end gable is a tripartite window, the central segment arched, with beneath it a platform with the dado panelling which extends round the walls raised above it: the meeting room is open to the roof trusses. The meeting room has a set of furniture from Bryn Mawr, a Quaker initiative to provide work for the unemployed in South Wales.

I have also received an email from local historian Paul Ferris:

I have recently been reading two excellent articles about the early years of the Quakers in Malvern. The first was about the opening of the Meeting House in Orchard Road which outlines Miss Miriam Davis's speech referring to William Sparkes and his conscientious objection to the paying of church rates in the years before 1868. The second article was about the early history which again referred to William Sparkes and to the very first meetings in Malvern.



He has found evidence that in the 1880's meetings were held above the stables of 'Portland Place' off Church Street with a seating capacity of 60. The image is of the entrance.

The article by Peter Bevan in our Newsletter celebrating 75th Anniversary of Malvern Meeting House (Summer 2013) also included the theory that Meeting for Worship was held above the stables in Church Street.

Let me know if you'd like to see the full correspondence on this.



The repaired Peace Garden Benches

The benches at the Peace Garden at the Cube is were vandalised earlier in the year. The folk at the Cube undertook to get them repaired, with local volunteer helpers. Meeting has now paid £100 for this. Thanks to Melanie Jameson for initiating this.