

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends – Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuhawiri

January, February 2025

Spiritual Thought

Every person who speaks from the spirit is giving a gift. Yet, for the speaker, the gift consists in being heard. Thus, every person who listens in the spirit has given a gift of equal or greater worth.

QF&P 2024 Gemma Mason 2022

News of and for Friends

Lawrence and **Marie** have recovered from covid in January and are planning some holiday time in the southern part of the South Island. They are looking forward to the start of Te Reo classes in March.

Rex & Helen spent two weeks down the Sounds working for DOC camp hosting. Rex is losing contact with Friends he has shared Te Reo classes with for the past three years, as he has enrolled in a te reo class where he lives. Rex is still establishing the grounds at the new Presbyterian church in Champion Rd. His aim this year is to spend less time with the community, and more time at home, and with the whanau.

Jan: Prior to Christmas Jan had some very enjoyable time with her brothers and sister, including a walk in the Abel Tasman, a weekend in Christchurch and a road trip to the Catlins. Topped up with 'sibling time' she was happy to have a quiet Christmas at home. Recently she had friends from the US come to stay for a few days, people she hadn't seen for decades, and found the gap of years can quickly close in good company!

Gwen has made a submission on the GE/GMO Gene Technology Bill as well as on Bills about the Treaty of Waitangi, Fast Track environment destruction, Regulatory Standards and End of Life Choice. Her main point on the GMO Bill was the financial advantages of NZ being thought of as clean, green and GE/GMO free. Other nations competing for the high value food dollar would love us to lose that competitive advantage. Her own preference is for NZ to be self-sufficient in food and not profit driven - dream on - someone visiting left a yogurt pottle in her fridge with yogurt made in Australia.

Peter and Phillida have created a video of Phillida's excellent presentation on the role of Quaker women in the 18th century in advancing abolition and the rights of

Wednesday 26th February 7.30pm Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St. Whakatu Nelson: Discussion on Yearly Meeting Structures and Processes. The goal is to engage and discern simpler, more sustainable structures and processes that will reduce administrative demand whilst nourishing the leadership and life of our faith community. Feedback is due 14th March, in preparation for Yearly Meeting in May.

Sunday March 2nd Christchurch Monthly Meeting, Zoom link as per weekly Meetings for Worship.

Friday March 7th, Millers Acre, Nelson City, 5.30pm Joy Ride, (cyclists reclaiming the City).



Saturday 8th March 7.30pm
Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St.
Whakatu Nelson:

Quiz Night! Bring all your friends and a contribution to supper.

All welcome. (Big prizes not guaranteed)

February 17 is the day the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1863. Four years earlier, Swiss national Henri Dunant, while traveling on a business trip in northern Italy, witnessed a bloody battle in the Italian war for independence. What struck Dunant was that the nearly 40,000 people killed or wounded were virtually left alone on the battlefield; no one was caring for them. Dunant immediately began organizing the locals to help all the victims, no matter which side of the conflict they were on. The project overwhelmed him; he eventually abandoned his business and fell into bankruptcy — but he kept at it. And in 1901, Dunant was awarded the very first Nobel Peace Prize. Now remember this factoid – it might win you the Quiz!



Our Newsletter is a way to share our lives – to help build our Quaker community. Thanks to everyone who has sent contributions. Please consider sending in your news, a book review, a quote that speaks to you. Send newsletter items for the March letter to Jan at janmarsh37@gmail.com. **The cut-off date for items for the next newsletter is Friday, March 7th.**

A reminder about Quakers NZ Website:



<https://quakers.nz/> is the database for the New Zealand Religious Society of Friends. It is a useful source of information on people and events. Please get into the habit of referring to the database, and please make sure your details are entered and up to date. This is where we go when we are looking for a Friend's phone number, etc. This database is only as good as the data you enter so, please make use of this important communication tool.

Nelson Meeting newsletters and lots of other material is posted and archived there. **You can subscribe to the Aotearoa NZ Friends Newsletter there.**

Notice: there is currently a content freeze to allow us to transition to our upgraded website. If you have any questions, please [get in touch with the helpdesk](#).

Palestinian Freedom:

Quakers have been joining rallies for Palestinian freedom since October 2023, and at most of them we have carried our Peace banner. We are glad for the people of Palestine that a tenuous ceasefire is now in place, but Israel continues to violate the terms. Al Jazeera Feb 12 reported:

- Vital earthmoving equipment has been blocked entry

- only 70% of the agreed 600 aid trucks a day have made it through
- only 10% of the agreed 200,000 tents have been allowed in
- < 15% of the agreed 50 patients daily have been evacuated

All the while, the Israeli military is intensifying its campaigns of ethnic cleansing & displacement in the occupied West Bank, displacing almost 40,000 Palestinians from their homes.



Small Kindnesses

Danusha Lameris

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you"

when someone sneezes, a leftover
from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying.
And sometimes, when you spill lemons
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you
pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other.
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.
We have so little of each other, now. So far
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these
fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here,
have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."

A brief Theology of Valentine's Day, February 14th

Before Hallmark, before long-stemmed roses delivered to your door or your desk, before heart-shaped boxes of chocolates with embossed "flavour maps" — there was St. Valentine. Actually, there may have been two. The history's pretty murky and includes legends about an early Christian priest (or was it a bishop?) martyred for (perhaps?) surreptitiously helping Christians to wed. So uncertain are the details, in fact, that in 1969 the Roman Catholic Church officially discontinued liturgical veneration of St. Valentine, though he's still on the list of recognized saints.

But the holiday lives on. It turns out Chaucer, of all people, may be the reason why: the late-medieval poet penned "Parliament of Foules" sometime around 1375, including a link — embellished by more than a little poetic license — between courtly love and St. Valentine's feast day. February 14, Chaucer wrote, is the day birds come together to find a mate: "For this was sent on Seynt Valentyne's day / Whan every foul cometh ther to choose his mate." A lovely day indeed — and as the poem's fame spread, so did the day's association with affection, both avian and human.

But however fanciful these various legends may be, there's a deeper wisdom beneath the whimsy. For centuries in Christian thought, the most prestigious book

in the Bible, the “graduate school” of Christian spirituality, wasn’t Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or the Book of Genesis, or the Psalms. It was the Song of Songs, an ancient — and pretty racy! — romantic poem about love in a world fraught with danger. Over the centuries, the poem was interpreted as an unsurpassed figurative portrait of the love between God and God’s people.

Not that God’s love for us is sexual, exactly; rather, the idea is that the intensity, intimacy, and delight of sexual love can be a kind of window, a sacramental glimpse, an experiential parable for understanding God’s affection. Divine love is tender and kind, immersive and ecstatic, full of longing and delight. It’s vulnerable, beautiful, gentle, and strong.

No doubt St. Valentine would approve :)

So, this Valentine’s Day, I hope you could think of all the love in your life — the love you feel and the love you witness; the love you remember and the love you long for; even the love among the birds of the air! — as a sacramental glimpse, an experiential parable of God’s care for all creation. And if you’re especially perceptive (or especially mischievous), you can glimpse divine love even in places as ordinary as a sweet little greeting card, an arrangement of flowers, or a flavour map embossed on a heart-shaped lid.

If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, the truth about God’s love is that it’s all around us, the Song of all songs, the Symphony of all symphonies, echoing everywhere.

Happy Valentine’s Day!
Love,
The SALT Team

Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill Submission by Quakers Aotearoa

<https://quakers.nz/ym/news/quakers-position-treaty-principles-bill>

Friends including Nelson Friends formulated and submitted a response to the Act Party’s Bill. You can read it in full on the URL above. Here is a summary:

1. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri opposes the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill (the bill) in its entirety because its introduction, without negotiation, proposes to unilaterally diminish the rights negotiated in good faith by Māori and the Crown, as articulated in Te Tiriti o

Waitangi 1840. The process demonstrably lacks integrity.

2. We oppose several specific aspects of the bill, in particular, clause 6, Principle 2, subclause (2). This clause would have the effect of curtailing the effective, largely unique, Aotearoa New Zealand approach to constitutional arrangements that involves ongoing conversation and experimentation. Legislation developed in this way has successfully led to incremental change to our constitutional arrangements, with a high degree of community consensus.

3. We also oppose clause 2 of the bill which provides for a referendum, as we consider that there are complex issues of social and legal justice involved for which a simple referendum question is an inappropriate process and risks social division rather than consensus.

4. We consider the bill a breach of Aotearoa New Zealand's international obligations as a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which explicitly recognises the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples (Tino rangatiratanga).

5. Accordingly, we recommend that the Committee does not proceed with any part of the bill.

6. We also recommend that the Committee give consideration to Citizens' Assemblies and other means of building consensus around the role of Te Tiriti through ongoing education and national discussion.

February 16 is the day in 600 that Pope Gregory, the story goes, recommended "God bless you" as the appropriate response to a sneeze. The plague was at its height in Europe, and the idea was that the blessing would help protect the sneezing person from sickness and death. As the plague spread, so did the custom. (Another trivial Quiz question)

Protect Te Waikoropupū Springs.

Lawrence forwarded this newsletter from the Save Our Springs team:

Last weekend (Feb 8/9) we received reports from homeowners near the Cobb Valley, and from festival attendees, that helicopters with building equipment were flying into the Sams Creek area. Judging from the amount of building material it's likely, Siren Gold is building a **new drilling platform**. There are two portacoms, a shower, toilet, washing machine, dryer and a freezer. There's also a helipad.



The site is being developed by the drilling company 'Alton Drilling Limited' whose home base is in Waihi. Alton Drilling Ltd staff are working at the site. Alton works for Siren Gold.

This is the beginning of a two-year deep drilling program by Siren Gold that could lead to the building of an arsenic mine.

Save Our Springs wants to make it very clear, that we **strongly oppose drilling at Sams Creek**. We intend to work alongside like-minded individuals, groups and organisations to **Stop the Drill**.

We want Siren Gold/Alton Drilling to be very aware; **WE ARE HERE** and are utterly opposed to the **desecration and pollution** of Sams Creek and Te Waikoropupū Springs

We intend to work alongside like-minded activists, artists and everyday people to develop creative **Non-Violent Direct Action** (NVDA) strategies intended to stop the drilling.

We have an experienced strategy team at the helm.

Our lawyer Sally Gepp is looking for ways to stop the mine including examining Siren Gold's consents.

We intend to develop a **response group** in Golden Bay. The group will look at creative and artistic ways to come together and **Stop the Drill**. The group will develop its own life and direction.

Siren Gold doesn't have the evidence (yet) to prove to investors that a mine at Sams Creek is financially viable. We are beginning to work with experienced Australian Environmentalists to find ways to alert Australian investors to their peril. **Siren Gold is a bad bet.**

If you oppose the drilling, we encourage you to contact Alton Drilling Ltd and let them know why. A thoughtful and respectful email or phone call is likely to get a better response. It's unlikely Alton is aware of the sacred nature of Sams Creek and that its waters feed the tapu waters of Te Waikoropupū Springs. You can contact Alton via the link.

<https://www.altondrilling.co.nz/contact/>

If you live in Golden Bay and want to join the response group, kindly contact us at saveoursprings2018@gmail.com and we'll let you know the venue and time (when we find one). Suggestions welcome.

Thank you for signing the petition and supporting our efforts to protect Sams Creek and Te Waikoropupū.

Kia kaha

Kevin Moran
Coordinator; working alongside the organising team

Online Resources: visit our own website quakers-in-nelson.org.nz, the national website quakers.nz and our Face Book page [@Nelson Quakers](https://www.facebook.com/NelsonQuakers).

From The Guardian: an article on conflicts that are currently being ignored by our media, there's more (sadly) than Ukraine and Gaza.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/02/the-world-at-war-the-flashpoints-that-the-west-ignores?utm_term=679f1b7ac396693e345ff96bb927d935&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayUK&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTUK_email

Our Programme: below is a reminder of the different activities each month.

All Sundays: Meeting for Worship, 10am, Quaker Meeting House, 30 Nile St.

Whakatu

2nd Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10am, Family Service Centre, Talbot St. Motueka

3rd Wednesday: Home Discussion Group, 7pm – 8.45pm. Topic & venue tba

Children are welcome at all Meetings for Worship and activities will be provided for them.

1 REVIEW OF OUR YEARLY MEETING STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES 2025 DISCUSSION STARTERS AND QUESTIONS

“Historically, Friends have seen our structures as religious testimony, a key witness to putting our faith into practice. But if we cling to them in detail mechanically, they become a box to imprison us rather than a trellis on which we can grow, flower and fruit.” Elizabeth Duke, 2013. Section 8.22. Quaker Faith and Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand 2024.

WHY THIS REVIEW? WHAT ARE WE BEING CALLED TO DO?

To engage and discern: simpler, more sustainable structures and processes that will reduce administrative demand whilst nourishing the leadership and life of our faith community. The need for changes to our structures and processes was identified prior to Yearly Meeting (YM) 2024 in response to the urgent and ongoing challenges of filling Yearly Meeting roles. Action to progress this was noted in Minute 36 Yearly Meeting 2024.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY YEARLY MEETING?

The term describes both an entity/structure, and processes. For this review we are looking at the national entity/structure of the Religious Society of Friends of Aotearoa New Zealand and the national business of the Society, including Yearly Meeting in session, a process. See Appendix 2 for more detail. You might like to start your group discussion of this paper with a brief round of worship sharing about: When you think of YM, what comes to mind? If YM were laid down - what would we as MMs and individuals miss most?

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM OUR REVIEW (2015/16)?¹

It was really helpful to refine our vision, leadings and priorities and some new structures were put in place to support those. Yet we didn't reduce administrative demands! It's not easy to let go of current committees/ways of doing things. We must however face the truth that the status quo is unsustainable and there is an urgency to act.

Our review in 2015/16 identified the following leadings and priorities:

- The Religious Society of Friends is a community with a spiritual foundation. Nurturing the spirit was seen to be of fundamental importance.
- The social testimonies and social action are also critically important. As these spring from the spiritual foundation, they reinforce the need for nurturing the spirit.
- Community life itself is vital and needs to be nurtured and developed so that respect for that of God in each of us leads to loving relationships in which, for example, conflict is managed constructively.
- Flourishing Worship Groups with larger numbers of people and greater diversity of ages, stages and cultures is our vision for the future. More attention therefore needs to be given to outreach and visibility.

1 <https://quakers.nz/ym/pages/ym-structure-review-2015-2016> You will need to login to the website to access.

HOW IS GOOD ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACHIEVED?

YM and its committees, Trusts and role holders, hold leadership functions as well as hands on 'doing' functions. Organisational leadership includes key different forms of ministry including:

- oversight of present operations.
- foresight in planning for the future.
- generative thinking spaces to develop insights about key learnings, challenges, opportunities, and necessary adaptations. It is common for organisations to spend most time on oversight and not to attend to foresight and insight functions, even though these are essential for navigating change and complexity. We all bring different gifts and strengths to this collective work. Quakers' spirit-led discernment at its best supports attention to all three of these key aspects.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR REFLECTION, DISCERNMENT AND FEEDBACK

We warmly invite your ideas about improvements to our YM structure and/or processes that will enable us to put our faith into practice and support our worshipping communities. In engaging your hearts and minds on these questions, please carefully consider how your ideas will support our underlying aim to reduce the work of YM and nourish the life of our faith community.

1. What changes to Worship Groups, Monthly Meetings, or YM Committees might reduce the work of YM? For example, what might we do differently, do less, or stop doing?
2. What are the core essentials needed at a national level to support the work of Quakers in Aotearoa?
3. What would/does motivate your sense of calling to participate in the life of YM?
4. What are the "low hanging fruit" of changes that we could experiment with? The table below offers a summary of the problems we seek to address, our key objectives and some examples of ideas shared already. As you listen to the promptings of love and truth, what light can you bring to help simplify our

organisational work and free energy for our core spiritual purpose?

HOW TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS?

- Share your Monthly Meeting, Worship Group, or individual feedback no later than 14th March, 2025, by email to adrianskelton@friend.quakers.nz.

- **There will also be a Zoom hui on Monday 17th February 2025, 7 – 8.30 pm.** This will include an introduction, breakout groups, and sharing in the full group. We encourage you to register for this Zoom session here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScCUIR7HXwDDhoxKfU4M_b4gCFcuLQq_ZaBYW8o15UAr_dBkQ/viewform

- There will then be a workshop at Yearly Meeting in May 2025, and an associated paper

3 WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? REVIEW OBJECTIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE PARTS OF A SOLUTION

- ❖ Too few people.

- ❖ Too many jobs.

- ❖ Too much time on administration taking energy away from spiritual purpose.

Simplify structures and processes to reduce administrative demands on our people and planet.

- ❖ Grouping committees around 3 or 4 core essential needs.

- ❖ Laying down some committees and combining others.

- ❖ More self-managing groups (e.g. Rainbow Quakers) compared to appointed committees.

- ❖ Paid administrative help on some core requirements.

- ❖ People want to engage and contribute in response to a sense of calling not duty.

- ❖ Most current roles too large for people unless they are retired.

- ❖ Younger generation likely to want to do things differently.

Shape more sustainable structures and processes fit for the future and to support spirit-led decision-making on issues that deeply matter to us.

- ❖ People taking on specific tasks/projects than longer term roles.

- ❖ Increased use of Standing Committee for national business.

- ❖ Increased use of national Zoom meetings for discernment on key issues.

- ❖ Reduce the length of time of YM to a weekend.

- ❖ Review how often we need YM Clerk letters and newsletters.

- ❖ Increase cooperation between neighbouring Monthly Meetings and explore the possibility of merging some.

- ❖ Limited resourcing for but professional expectations of a tiny group of technically capable volunteers (e.g. communication systems; accounting; legal)

- ❖ People in roles can experience aloneness, burden and criticism.

Shape ways of working that nourish the leadership and life of our faith community.

- ❖ 'Pods' of two or three people sharing roles.

- ❖ Support and appreciate those who take on roles.

- ❖ Grow practice of non-violent communication skills.
 - ❖ Fewer local business meetings focused on YM matters - which may also lead to consideration of revising terms like 'Monthly Meeting' towards language like 'local meeting', 'regional' or 'area' meeting'.
 - ❖ **It's not easy to let go of current ways of doing things, but we must face the truth that the status quo is unsustainable and there is an urgency to act.**
- Support courageous, creative, spirit-led decisions about how to experiment with new ways of doing and learn from so doing.
- ❖ YM structures, processes and culture find a good balance between oversight, foresight and generative thinking spaces for sharing spirit-led insights and decision-making.
 - ❖ What if our YM gathering was primarily a place and a process for discernment around key leadings and collective priorities for the year(s) ahead?

Ngā mihi mahana from Working Group:

Margy-Jean Malcolm, Adrian Skelton, Ronis Chapman, Anne Hall

4 APPENDIX: FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

A QUICK GUIDE TO QUAKER STRUCTURE AND PROCESS IN AOTEAROA NZ

We Quakers / Friends are a religious body, developed in this country from early settlers, mostly from Britain, who brought the faith from home and convinced others. Since 1964 we have been a self-governing 'Yearly Meeting'. Locally we gather in 'Worship Groups', which care for their own Meetings for Worship and activities. Worship Groups are clustered in seven regional 'Monthly Meetings' (MMs), which care for the life of Quakers in their region, including spiritual and religious oversight, pastoral care, finance, property if any, consideration of membership applications and responsibility for conducting marriages and civil unions. The business meetings of a MM also contribute to the collective decisions of Yearly Meeting (YM) during the year. YM as a body has oversight of our role as a national organisation, including communications (e.g. website), relations to Quakers worldwide, relations to Government, links to other bodies with congenial aims and values, and our shared finances and property. It meets annually for overall consideration of our collective life and also makes decisions during the year. YM Committees focus on aspects of our communal life and our witness to the world. Elizabeth Duke, Jan 2025

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM QUAKERS IN OTHER COUNTRIES?

Quakers in Australia, UK and elsewhere are also grappling with similar issues. All are using online gatherings for doing some of their organisational business, and many are also doing so for Meetings for Worship and education purposes. In recent years two Meeting houses have been sold in Australia and the Yearly Meeting has employed a Communications person who lives in the United States.

Two thought-provoking keynote addresses (Open for Transformation and Visualising Quaker Futures) from the recent British Future of Quakerism conference make the

case for why we need to “cast away what we can’t cope with”, focus on what’s needed for our core spiritual purpose to thrive and to trust that “the Spirit is quite creative enough ... to work in a whole range of different ways and formats.” While our contexts are different, these talks may offer a catalyst for creative thinking individually or collectively. Videos and transcripts of these two talks are available on this link using the password FoBQ2024

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/our-courses/fobq/>

WHERE DID THE OVERSIGHT, FORESIGHT, INSIGHT IDEAS COME FROM?

<https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Re-Imagining-Governance.pdf> has more background about these concepts. The original source of the concepts Richard Chait et al: Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards. John Wiley & Sons, 2005. These ideas have been widely used by community and faith-based organisations to help them adapt and enhance their leadership structures and processes.