NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

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

July 2026

Spiritual Thought

> "Hope has nothing to do with what you think is going to happen, and everything to do with where you point your life, sometimes in spite of the odds, rather than because of them."
>
> — David LaMotte, 2025
> Quaker musician and author
> David LaMotte: Quaker Musician and Hope-Monger

News of Friends

Our thoughts are with **Lizi** as she grieves for the death of her grandson. He was 22 years old and had bravely survived a cancer diagnosis since late last year. We hold her and her family in the light.

John M is recovering from a dog attack, a sad end to a very positive time in Nepal presenting AVP workshops. See his report later in the newsletter.

Clive and Margaret braved a weekend of unsettled weather and disrupted travel to go to Wellington where Clive and his brother ran a 10 km event and they spent time with family. Next they will go to Christchurch to attend a birthday party for theirr grandson. They are reducing the size of theirr orchard by approx a third, by cutting out trees

A small core of regular Friends are holding the space for Meetings for Worship as winter bites and Friends' commitments reduce our numbers.

Meantime, unusually for winter, our guest accommodation has been busy with Friends from Wellington, Whanganui, Auckland and Christchurch staying, with locals needing the odd night as well. Our guests find the Meeting House peaceful and welcoming to stay in and conveniently placed for cafes and any other activities in Nelson.

With Junior Young Friends camp in our area, at Bethany, Kaiteriteri, Nelson Friends hosted the young people for a session at our Meeting House to learn about John Sylvanus Cotterell and the first Meeting House in New Zealand.

FRIENDS DISCUSSION GROUP
Wednesday 8 July 2026

Six hardy friends braved the winter night to discuss how we are going here in Nelson with our Friends meeting culture.

We had been requested to discuss a number of areas by the national friends Pastoral and Spritual care Committee (PSCC).

The areas included

- creating safe spaces
- Sense of belonging
- Acknowledging each other's abilities, frailties and needs
- dealing with conflict and restorative processes
- accessing extra support when required
- having fun and enjoying one another

We had a wide-ranging discussion that led to our views on how we are going.

Our meeting is safe and welcoming. Maybe more can be done to befriend newcomers. It can be confusing at first and some find silence itself confronting. We can make more of an effort to explain the why and how of what we do.

We acknowledged that the sense of belonging grows over time. Friends choose to belong by choice. Each of us can engage with new people and visitors to foster their sense of 'being part of'.

We though we lacked confidence in dealing with conflict when it arises and can benefit with more training in this area. There are known processes that we could become more familiar with.

Our recognition of those who were struggling or had specific needs could be improved, we thought. We wondered if there were more opportunities in Reflections for people to let others know if they need more assistance.

We also discussed ways we can have fun with and enjoy one another outside of the Meeting environment. We thought it was easier in summer when we could meet outside easily. We could make more effort to have events in winter such as a movie night. Regular discussion groups are another way to foster our appreciation and enjoyment of each other.

Other things we mentioned that could form topics for future discussions included:

- How to make 'stepping over the threshold' into the Meeting House easier
- The Words on the Meeting Houise and what they mean to us
- Strategies for making Quakers more visible in Nelson

We finished appreciating the work we had done and feeling pretty good !



DIARY OF EVENTS:

Sunday 2nd August: Business Meeting after Meeting for Worship and a shared lunch. We hope to begin around 12.15pm. Agenda items to Clive by 29th July.

Thursday 6th August and Sunday 9th August: Vigils for Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days on the Church Steps 12 to 1pm.

In other news...

Report on Friends Peace teams and AVP International Visit to Nepal April/May 2026

John Michaelis, June 9th 2026

How it began

Over a period of 5 years or more, Ram Paudel, Tom Martin, Deb Wood, and John Michaelis have met monthly online as a companion group.

In December 2025, Ram shared with our group, a quiet but persistent longing:

To rebuild a strong and vibrant team of Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) facilitators in Kathmandu and Pokhara. To Ram, this felt like a seed waiting for the right season and we resonated with him. John decided to try to gather a team together. He knew that Sue Wozniak, an experienced AVP facilitator from Seattle was about to begin a Sabbatical and hearing the opportunity she was keen to join. Soon after, Don McPhee, the sitting president of AVP International, added his energy and joined us. What had begun as a simple wish slowly unfolded into a powerful collective intention.

Kathmandu
Ram, John, Sue, and Don came together in Kathmandu, late In March 2026 — four facilitators, united by a shared spirit of peace and transformation. We began with a Training for Facilitators (T4F) workshop in, nurturing not just skills but relationships, trust, and hope. Kathmandu once held a strong and active AVP community. However, the devastating 2015 earthquake disrupted not only infrastructure but also the continuity of many valuable initiatives. This effort felt like gently breathing life back into something precious that had long been waiting to rise again. Twenty-one Nepali participants, all of whom had previously attended AVP workshops and were ready to apply AVP in their personal and professional lives, gathered for a Training for Facilitators workshop (T4F). Many were already working in the field of mental and emotional well-being. The first day provided a solid foundation: revisiting community agreements, practising deep listening and mindful speaking, reflecting together, exploring masks, examining the link between events, feelings, and needs, and using “I-messages.” On the second and third days, participants worked in small teams, with each team facilitating an AVP session while the rest of us took part. There was laughter, vulnerability, learning, and unlearning. Each activity became a mirror, and each interaction a step toward deeper self-awareness. Participants said they were moved not only by the structure of the training but by its spirit—experiencing the power of consensus, the Fishbowl feedback method, meaningful debriefing, learning and laughing together, embracing mistakes as part of growth, and creating a space where listening, sharing, and caring came naturally. We all were reminded that AVP is not just a workshop but a lifelong practice and a way of living. We committed to continuing this journey through personal practice, co-facilitation with experienced facilitators, and regular meetings to learn and grow together.

… John goes on to describe workshops in Ghorka, Pokhara and Beni, followed by some trekking in the Annapurna region. He was attacked by a dog which broke its chain and received hospital treatment for his injuries.

The report ends with:

Reflection from Sue Wozniak and Ram Paudel
For me personally, this journey has been transformative. After a long time, I had the opportunity to facilitate Advanced and T4F workshops alongside deeply experienced facilitators. It opened a space within me—to rediscover my core, to deepen my understanding of self, and to embrace wider perspectives of connection and humanity. This experience has not only strengthened my facilitation skills but also touched something spiritual within me. It reminded me that peace work is not only about techniques—it is about presence, humility, and love. Looking ahead, my heartfelt intention is to nurture a strong and committed AVP Facilitator team in Pokhara—one that grows not only in skills but also in compassion, awareness, and inner transformation. A team that carries not just knowledge, but a living spirit of peace. Thank you.

For the full report see:

AVP Nepal April-May 2026.docx

From our Friends in Barnt Green and Redditch Meeting

Seven Quaker Women in the Past

Margaret Fell-Fox (1614-1702) 'Those that speak against the power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a woman, simply by reason of her sex, or because she is a woman, not regarding the Seed and Spirit and Power that speaks in her, such speak against Christ and his Church.' (1666)

Mary Dyer (1611-1660) was an activist and Friend who was dedicated to promoting religious freedom for Quakers despite countless prison sentences and the risk to her own life. Her execution for defying Puritan law, brought about a key provision of the Rhode Island Charter of 1663, which guaranteed religious freedom for settlers there, eventually paving the way for Constitutional rights guaranteeing freedom of worship.

Sarah Mapps Douglass (1806-1882) was a scholar, educator, abolitionist, and artist whose legacy has much to teach us now. Her famous watercolour paintings appeared in a rare collection of letters written between friends and represent the earliest surviving signed paintings by an African American woman.

Lucretia Mott: (1793-1880) was an abolitionist, a feminist, and a human rights activist. When she and many other women found themselves excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840, Lucretia began forming ideas for promoting equal rights measures for women. She would go on to organize the Seneca Falls Convention with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and was elected the first president of the American Equal Rights Association, a universal suffrage advocacy organization.

Sarah Moore Grimké (1792-1873) and Angelina Emily Grimké (1805-1879)
Born to a life of privilege and wealth in the South, the Grimké sisters renounced their slave-holding heritage to become two of the most celebrated members of the abolitionist movement in the United States. They were also outspoken feminists who became pioneers for women's rights in America.

Alice Paul (1885-1977) One of the central figures in the fight to secure voting rights for women, Alice Paul's Quaker upbringing in Mount Laurel, NJ, heavily influenced her activism. She was also the student of some of the most celebrated Quaker education institutions, including Moorestown Friends School (where she graduated top of her class), Swarthmore College, and the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England.

Friends World News: July 2026

Hello, I'm Ella Morris – Priority Projects Manager at FWCC World Office and also new editor of Friends World News. Ruby Cumming has moved on to her new venture and I'm a little nervous to pick up the mantle from her very capable hands, but am also eager and excited to connect with the global family of Friends.

As I take up this new task I am reminded of a teaching from 1 Peter 3:8 - "'Have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.'" I hope to approach this monthly communication with you with all these qualities at the forefront.

Our annual print edition of Friends World News is published today, which you can read online first, here. We'll also be posting to Friends churches and Meeting Houses where we can, and in some cases distributing by hand via Sections where post isn't reliable. If your meeting doesn't have a building but would like to be posted a copy, please email me with your address.

Since the last edition of this monthly Friends World News e-newsletter we have received the epistle for the FWCC Europe and Middle East Section annual meeting, which references reports of Friends in Russia, Lebanon, Ukraine and Switzerland, among other places. You can read the epistle here.

We've also heard from the Young Quaker Christian Association Africa who recently held a big event in Kenya to mark International Day of the African Child. The theme was Ensuring Universal Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for every African child. The event was a success and was featured on Kenyan TV, the photo below is from the event.

Looking ahead, next month there will be an opportunity to join together as a global community for worship. EMES will be hosting worship online, open to all, on August 12th as part of their All Age Gathering. The meeting will be semi-programmed with an opportunity to meet other Quakers from across the globe in small groups afterwards. You can find full details and register on their website, here.

This will be a great opportunity to prepare for World Quaker Day (4th October) where we plan to host a massive open online worship meeting, spanning time zones, traditions and languages. You can now register your interest – and we'll send you out the Zoom link closer to the time with joining instructions and agenda. You might like to start planning how to take part this year. Meetings and church groups are very welcome to join together, or you might prefer to join as an individual.

I'm looking forward to this World Quaker Day being a meaningful opportunity for us to come together and see as many of us together online as possible!

In Friendship
Ella
On behalf of the FWCC World Office



Poem

Earthling by Billy Collins *Taking off Emily Dickinson's Clothes* Poems 1988-2000

You have probably come across
those scales in planetariums
That tell how much you
would weigh on other planets.

You have noticed the fat ones
lingering on the Mars scale
and the emaciated slowing up
the line for Neptune.

As a creature of average weight,
I fail to see the attraction.

Imagine squatting in the wasteland
of Pluto, all five tons of you,
or wandering around Mercury,
wondering what to do next with your ounce.

How much better to step onto
the simple bathroom scale,
a happy earthling feeling
the familiar ropes of gravity.

157 pounds standing soaking wet
a respectful distance from the sun.

Deadline for next Newsletter 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 August letter to Christine: c.gillespie@xtra.co.nz **The cut-off date for items for the next newsletter is Friday, 7th August 2026.**

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.

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

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

Christchurch MM Meeting for Worship can be attended each Sunday at 10.30am by Zoom
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87862680716?pwd=e1pt0MhuXXuUP9fawEaxbxLKPWzndE.1

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

4th Wednesday: Home Discussion Group, 7pm – 8.45pm. Topic & venue for this month, see above

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