

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

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

December 2025

Spiritual Thought

Best of any song is bird song
in the quiet, but first
you must have the quiet.

Wendel Berry, 1997

News of and for Friends

Angus has finished the first year of his Commerce degree at NMIT with all A grades. He is looking forward to going to Summer Gathering again this year.

Jan has provided three items for this newsletter. If we had a chocolate fish it would go to her!

Phillida has issued an open invitation for Friends to join her and John on Christmas Day for lunch and companionship. It will be a catered event so no need to bring a plate. They ask that you RSVP by December 22nd so they know how many to expect.

Peter led a discussion last month exploring ways to help bring Palestinians' plight to NZers attention. At Business Meeting this month we agreed to explore with Nelson City Council Nelson and Ramallah becoming sister cities.

Lizzie and her family continue to hold her grandson Ben in the Light on his cancer journey. Family members are gathering from around the country for Christmas.

Lawrence and Marie are currently holidaying with family in Auckland.

John M is back from his prolonged stay in the US, after surgery there. He was feted recently by his many friends for his 80th birthday:

John M's birthday celebration:

After some delay in the US while awaiting throat surgery, John M returned to Nelson in November and was able to celebrate his 80th birthday a few months late. In spite of the sad news that he and Anthea were separating after 56 years of marriage, it was a joyful gathering of Friends and friends from different parts of John's life – the Quaker meeting, the Climate Forum, singing – many of whom knew each other and mingled, chatting. Anthea and Justine kept a steady stream of tasty food coming from the kitchen and friends paused when the cake came

out, to sing 'Happy Birthday'. A few made heartfelt speeches about the friendship they have with John and asked him about his plans for the coming year. His long and important commitment to AVP (Alternative to Violence Project) was mentioned. It was a warm celebration of John's life so far with some interesting adventures yet to come.



DIARY OF EVENTS:

Monday 8th – Friday 12th December 9am – 6pm Nelson Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival. Over 70 trees are on display, each one crafted by a community organisation, club or business. On top of that, during the first three weeks of December, there is a different concert each weekday at 1pm. Free admission.

Sunday 14th December after Meeting for Worship 12.30pm at Christine's house: Xmas shared lunch. All welcome.

Thursday 25th December 1.00pm, at Phillida's house: Xmas Lunch. This is catered so no contribution needed. Please RSVP by December 22nd. All welcome

Sunday 4th January 12.15pm Christchurch Monthly Meeting, get the Zoom link here: meeting@christchurch.quakers.nz

Sunday 10th January 10am Family Service Centre, Talbot Street, Motueka: Meeting for Worship. All welcome



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 January/February newsletter to Jan at janmarsh37@gmail.com. **The cut-off date for items for the next newsletter is Friday, January 30th**

Quakers NZ Website: quakers.nz: is our national outreach tool for inquirers and the database for Quakers in Aotearoa. If you have not got an account yet (which allows you to see content just for Friends, such as the Climate Emergency Correspondent's newsletters) and you would like one let Christine know. Nelson Meeting newsletters are posted on the national website on the Christchurch Monthly Meeting page or click on Find a Quaker Meeting.

[Quaker Meeting House sign in Te Reo](#) A long, often delayed process of creating a Maori language equivalent of our English sign is finally with the signwriter. Look out for it soon.

Top of the South Meeting 30th November



**Riverside
Community**

Jan Marsh reports:

On a grey Sunday morning we drove out to Moutere and gathered at Riverside for our regional meeting.

Hazel, a Riverside resident, greeted and guided us as we began with a cup of tea so that we could meet up with Friends from around the region. We settled into Meeting for Worship in the now familiar meeting room which feels instantly Quakerly.

We broke for lunch and even more animated conversation as the rain clouds gathered. We were just finishing the dishes when the Gospel Choir arrived to practice in the

chapel.

Their harmonies accompanied the beginning of our reflection and discussion on the topic 'Forgiveness and social justice', which Clive introduced. As we settled into the Worship-sharing process, even those for whom it was a new method, the meeting deepened and we were able share openly.

Some gave examples from their own lives where forgiveness had shone light onto a situation or literally lightened it so that it was no longer a burden. For many a way forward had emerged from this but even if it didn't, letting go brought some peace.

Some could link forgiveness with social justice; others saw them as separate processes. All agreed that both were important, personally where we might call it fairness, in communities and globally.

The rain was coming down hard as we left. It was a chance to see Riverside in a different mood, a day that had been satisfying and thought-provoking.

Remember shared lunch this Sunday at Christine's house.

Presentation by Cole Martin on living among Palestinian friends on the West Bank.



Cole's time in Palestine and his subsequent speaking tour around the country was supported by QPSANZ's Loxley award and the young journalist and photographer had made very good use of the support.

As we entered the Trafalgar St hall, Cole's photos lined the walls and the explanation for each one set the tone for his talk. Meantime, however, the smell of delicious Palestinian food was filling the hall and friends with different connections were meeting and pulling chairs into animated circles.

When we lined up to take our plates and have them filled by those who had been working all day in the kitchen, the range of dishes was amazing, every one delicious: moussaka, spicy rice, several different salads, then five different desserts

including a whole tray of crisp, syrupy baklava.

After we'd eaten, lights were dimmed for Cole's slide show which he spoke to in a most moving and authentic way. Although many of us have read of the injustices inflicted on the Palestinians of the West Bank by the Israeli army and settlers, Cole's experiences, alongside the men and women he called friends, brought it home in a personal way. In fact, one of the friends whose story he told while showing a photo of him, proved to be the brother of Said who had cooked our meal and is often to be seen at rallies for Palestine in Nelson.

At times Cole emphasised that many of his friends who he had met on his first visit six years before, were Christians, pointing out that their suffering was no different from that of Muslim Palestinians, but he wanted to show that they all had a lot in common with us. The video footage of the demolition of houses and then later the tents the same family had moved into was heart-breaking. Children could be seen standing nearby watching as their homes were torn apart by diggers, for no other crime than remaining on the land the settlers wanted. An old man showed Cole around land that used to be his home and farm, but which is now empty but for scrub and rough tracks where he walks from time to time. Land that Palestinians have been prevented from using will be claimed by settlers after a certain period, in a process reminiscent of the way Māori land was stolen by settlers in Aotearoa.

But most confronting of all was a situation in which a Palestinian friend of Cole's, standing on his own land, was shot point blank in the chest by an Israeli settler. He died on the spot and when the Israeli police/soldiers arrived, they arrested the dead man's family and let the settler go. There were many other personal stories which highlighted the injustice of the situation which we well know. I recalled our Friend Christina Gibb telling us about her experience on the Christian Peace Team and also Peter Watson who went to Palestine to help get in the olive harvest. The overall impression was that Cole was a brave and honest witness in an intractable situation. His message was that in order to keep hope alive we must continue to do what we can to advocate for justice.

Fundraising for Medical Aid for Palestine:

In the latest ANZ Friends Newsletter (p.13) Peter Watson put out a call for Friends willing to each sew up 6 cloth shopping bags for sale, to raise funds. If you have time, can sew, and are willing, let me know. Maybe we could arrange a sewing bee and enjoy each other's company while we work.

A Quiet Life

By Baron Wormser, 2022

What a person desires in life
is a properly boiled egg.
This isn't as easy as it seems.
There must be gas and a stove,
the gas requires pipelines, mastodon drills,
banks that dispense the lozenge of capital.
There must be a pot, the product of mines
and furnaces and factories,
of dim early mornings and night-owl shifts,
of women in kerchiefs and men with
sweat-soaked hair.
Then water, the stuff of clouds and skies
and God knows what causes it to happen.
There seems always too much or too little
of it and more pipelines, meters, pumping
stations, towers, tanks.
And salt — a miracle of the first order,
the ace in any argument for God.
Only God could have imagined from
nothingness the pang of salt.
Political peace too. It should be quiet
when one eats an egg. No political hoodlums
knocking down doors, no lieutenants who are
ticked off at their scheming girlfriends and
take it out on you, no dictators
posing as tribunes.
It should be quiet, so quiet you can hear
the chicken, a creature usually mocked as a type
of fool, a cluck chained to the chore of her body.
Listen, she is there, pecking at a bit of grain
that came from nowhere.

Seeking volunteers to nurture our Meeting spiritually, socially, practically in 2026:

Every year we encourage you to provide service to maintain and extend our Meeting's activities. You'll find a list of roles and their j.d.s attached to the December Business Meeting Minutes, and on the noticeboard in the Meeting House hallway. We hope you will consider deepening your attachment to our kaupapa by offering to fill a role.

Tidying up the Meeting House

Items considered surplus to requirements are free to a good home or will be donated to RESTORE. First in first served! They include:

a dehumidifier

four blue plastic children's chairs

an electric convection heater

some wobbly table lamps

a tall standard lamp (possibly)

spare bedding (possibly)

Contact Jan if any of these items catches your eye, or if you have strong feelings about anything staying in the meeting house.

Online Resources: visit our own website quakers-in-nelson.org.nz, the national website quakers.nz and our Face Book page @Nelson Quakers.

Elizabeth provided the following link to an article in the Guardian newspaper entitled **A moment that changed me: My unbearable grief kept growing – until I found solace in a silent community.**

The writer comments, "After my dad died, I tried to cope by keeping busy: a day job, a side hustle, socialising and working out. But I kept bursting into tears in public. At a Quaker meeting, it was as if someone had turned down the volume of the world".

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/dec/03/a-moment-that-changed-me-my-unbearable-grief-kept-growing-until-i-found-solace-in-a-silent-community>.

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, 7.30pm – 9.00pm. Topic & venue tba

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