

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

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

February 2021

Spiritual Thought

Mind the Light of God in your consciences, which will show you all deceit; dwelling in it guides out of the many things into one spirit, which cannot lie, nor deceive. Those who are guided by it are one.

George Fox

News of and for Friends

Elizabeth is making the most of the summer sun: 2 weeks ago, she walked the Nydia Track and this coming week she is off to tramp the Routeburn and Greenstone Tracks.

Jan has also been getting out into nature: she spent last weekend doing day walks in the Cobb Valley. Jan is currently planning a long sojourn in Melbourne with her daughter and granddaughter, Covid willing.

Lawrence and Marie remain in Auckland slowly sorting out a lifetime's worth of accumulated treasure in their home in Devonport in order to sell it.

Christine's broken toe has mended after having kept her from the garden and in the hammock for a while. She has happily returned to work. She had a lovely Waitangi weekend visiting friends who recently moved to Blackball.

Lizi has been busy over summer painting new artworks which may culminate in a solo exhibition.

A group of Friends headed by Elizabeth organised a venue, advertising, social media, email lists, posters and technology for the showing of the movie *Soldiers without Guns* on our local Anniversary weekend at very short notice! 53 people attended. Prior to the showing the organisers met and resolved to relaunch Peace Action Nelson after a rather long hiatus of about 20 years! More information below.

John and Anthea enjoyed hosting **Liz Remmerswaal and Ton** from Hawkes Bay Worship Group who included Nelson in their Sth Island tour with the movie.

Linda and her partner Sally have been holidaying in Central Otago through January, they got back home to Motueka on February 5th.

Our Friend **Jos** (Marlborough Worship Group) visited Meeting for Worship on February 14th. Jos recently suffered a car mishap and is happy to now have her car in good repair.

Gwen and Joanna celebrated their February birthdays at Founders Park on February 14th, enjoying the jazz band entertainment. We remember our late Friend Patricia who would have marked her 90th birthday this month, undoubtedly with a Quiz Night. **Phillida, Ocean** and Christine also have February birthdays.

Elizabeth and Joan have audited and culled old damaged books, journals, and unused audio/ video tapes from the Meeting House Library. They have also re-shelved the books in a more rational order.

DIARY OF EVENTS:

Wednesday February 17th 7pm – 9pm: Home Discussion Group. Venue and topic to be advised.

Saturday February 20th 10am – 3pm Headingly Centre, Headingly Lane, Richmond: Nelson Tasman Climate Forum Hui. Register online.

Saturday February 20th 9pm: Online Sustainability Conference with Friends Worldwide, 5 speakers; find out more and register here (its free): [FWCC Online Sustainability Conference](#)

Sunday February 28th 12 noon, Quaker Meeting House, 30 Nile St. Nelson: Inaugural Meeting of the revived Peace Action Group Nelson. All welcome.

Wednesday March 3rd 7pm Quaker Meeting House 30 Nile St.: Becoming Friends, sharing spiritual journeys. All welcome

Sunday March 8th 10am Family Service Centre 27 Talbot St. Motueka: Monthly Motueka Meeting for Worship. All welcome.

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 to Elizabeth Dooley at elizdooley@hotmail.com. The cut-off date for items for the March newsletter is Friday, March 6th, 2021.

News from Business Meeting

Premises:

Conversation/Quiet Room: we decided last December to repurpose the sunroom/office facing the street into a small Conversation/Quiet Room. We now have a new smaller filing cabinet, and we are downsizing and decluttering the House generally. Thermal curtains will be hung. Please feel free to visit during the day apart from the times outside organisations use our Meeting Room, to rest and read books from our excellent Library. Please don't visit after 5pm (unless organised and authorised) when our tenant and guests can rightly expect to have uninterrupted enjoyment of their accommodation.

(Outside organisations use our Meeting Room 12 noon – 1pm weekly Wednesdays and Fridays, and Thursdays 5.30 – 7pm every 4 weeks – next is 4th March).

Decluttering the Meeting Room: Business Meeting decided to clear all items from the walls of the Meeting Room to restore it to the traditional Quaker simplicity and serenity. The library will stay for want of alternative. Embroidery Panels, Peace Poppies and pictures will move into the Activities Room.

Accommodation: we revisited the provision of simple accommodation for visiting Friends, and affirmed we wish to continue to do so.

Meeting Roles: Friends have volunteered for roles – thanks to everyone who has put their name forward. Jan and Christine have been asked to complete the process of filling all the positions. The list will be published in the next newsletter.

Summer / Autumn Social: Clive and Margaret have offered their home for our annual foray into the countryside for a shared lunch and casual get together. Everyone associated with our Meeting is invited. We will meet at Clive's on Sunday 14th March after Meeting for Worship.

Embroidery Panels: Lizi is working with the experts to choose the best grade of reflective / non-reflective glass that will enhance the stitches whilst protecting them from sun or other damage. They will be displayed in the Activities Room. Progress is being made on getting them up onto our website quakers-in-nelson.org.nz.

Sunday Discussions: long ago we decided we wanted to have an after-Meeting discussion on the first Sunday of the month alternating with Business Meeting. We haven't been so diligent about it -at least we can blame Covid for 2020! We brainstormed topics: Should Peace Vigils be silent? What are we trying to

achieve with "Reflections" after Meetings for Worship? What is 'ministry' and how do we discern what is or isn't it?

We also decided to ask a Wellington Friend, Quentin Abrams, to visit Nelson to run **a workshop on what it means for non-Maori Quakers to truly uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi**. Quentin (an English immigrant) gave a presentation at Summer Gathering 2020/21 about learning Te Reo as his personal commitment to the treaty. We hope this might be possible on Sunday 7th March after Meeting for Worship. We'll let you know.

Peace Action Nelson / Liaison: A meeting is to be held on Sunday 28th February at 12 noon in the Meeting House to launch a new Peace Action group. We hope this will be a public group widely supported by the community. Please invite everyone you know who might be interested. A role of PAN Liaison will be added to the roles in the Meeting. If this is your passion, please step forward!

Next Business Meeting: 28th March 2021 after a shared lunch.

From "The Color Purple"

By Alice Walker

Listen, God love everything you love - and a mess of stuff you don't. But more than anything else, God love admiration.

You saying God vain? I ast.

Naw, she say. Not vain, just wanting to share a good thing. I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it.

What it do when it pissed off? I ast.

Oh, it make something else. People think pleasing God is all God care about. But any fool living in the world can see it

always trying to please us back.

Yeah? I say.

Yeah, she say. It always making little surprises and springing them on us when us least expect.

You mean it want to be loved, just like the bible say.

Yes, Celie, she say. Everything want to be loved. Us sing and dance, make faces and give flower bouquets, trying to be loved. You ever notice that trees do everything to git attention we do, except walk?

+ Alice Walker

From Salt Project: A Brief Theology of Valentine's Day

Before Hallmark, before long-stemmed roses delivered to your door or your desk, before heart-shaped boxes of chocolates with embossed "flavor 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; rather, the idea is that the intensity, intimacy, and delight of sexual love can be a kind of window, a sacramental parable, for understanding God's love. 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, 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 glimpse 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 "flavor 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

On-line resources: apart from our own website: quakers-in-nelson.org.nz and our Facebook page: Quakers in Nelson, and the national website quakers.nz:

Woodbrooke Learning Centre offers a plethora of online courses this year. Though not all of these are online, there are **53 options:** on Climate Crisis (10), Exploring Quakerism (6), History and Theology (14), Peace and Social Justice (6), Supporting Quaker Communities (6), Spirituality and Retreats (17) and the Bible (5). Some are free. They also offer online Meeting for Worship.

Explore more here:

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

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

<p>First Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am Wednesday: Becoming Friends, 7.00 pm – 8.45pm (Alternate Even Months) Sunday: Business Meeting 12.00 pm</p> <p>Second Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am</p> <p>Third Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am Wednesday: Home Discussions, 7.00 pm – 9.00pm</p> <p>Fourth Week of the Month: Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10.00–11.00am</p> <p><i>Children are welcome at all Meetings for Worship. Activities will be provided for them.</i></p>
