

Montreal Monthly Meeting Newsletter

Infolettre de l'Assemblée quaker de Montréal

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Life of the Meeting / La vie de l'assemblée

In November and December of 2025, Montreal Monthly Meeting continued our Quaker journey together. Our francophone group in Quebec surveyed their own needs for spiritual sustenance and have devised an original committee to ensure those needs are met (more below). In Montreal, Tina and Sophie joined Gennifer (formerly Geoffreyen) in the First Day School effort, filling in for Jonah who has moved to Vancouver. Geoff led us in a thoughtful worship-sharing session about "Bearing Witness" after one meeting. We walked three sets of stairs to the third floor at the Greene Centre a couple of times, as our usual meeting place was occupied by "worldly powers" - and enjoyed the sunlight as well as the view. Finally a Quaker network originating in the U.S. joined us after meeting in December to explain the desperation of refugees in the U.S. who are facing cruelty and displacement in various forms. The question arises: can Canadians help? We enjoyed our potluck on December 14 and focused on the joys of the season together. With the closure of the Greene Centre on the journeys of December 21 and 28, we continued First Day School on Zoom. On December 27th, the Quebec Worship Group held a Christmas Meeting for Worship at Gennifer's home. Gennifer had scones, and mince tarts on offer as well as hot apple juice with rum.

The New Year was ushered in with renewed spirits and record attendance at the Greene Centre (over 35 worshippers on January 18)! Special attendees in January were Starla from Afghanistan via Indonesia and Carla from Sarawar, both refugees whose arrival we celebrate. Carla was relayed from Florida to the Canadian border, then on to Toronto and Montreal, by Quakers.

Finally, here is a [link to a video](#) in which Jean-Louis addresses a group of Quakers gathered for a half-yearly meeting in Ontario, on October 25. In his talk, Jean-Louis gives his perspective of the founding of our francophone Quebec meeting. Since Jean-Louis was the founder, looking at the origin of this unique Quaker group is likely to inspire you.

Francophone Work Teams

To meet the needs for organization at the group level, and to encourage involvement, three teams have been formed. Each team has specific responsibilities. The first will focus on activities related to social engagement, second on enrichment activities for our group or for the general public, and the third on Quebec education in French. This is something to keep an eye on as it unfolds...

First Day School

With the arrival of Tina Rothchild and Sophie Cleff to the First Day School initiative, we have started to plan for upcoming sessions. With three of us it will be easier to manage the diverse ages of our cohort of children. Furthermore, both Tina and Sophie bring new skills to the initiative. Sophie is a music teacher, for example, and so we will be introducing more music into the mix, and we have plans to undertake more physically diverse activities to help channel exuberant energies. We would ask parents to be mindful that the Meeting now has three dedicated animators and to encourage your children to come and participate. More news to come!

Time to Learn / Formations

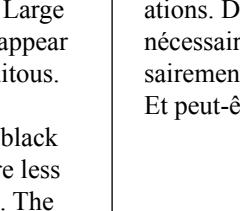
Upcoming Courses in English:

<https://pendlehill.org/learn/resources/>

Ongoing workshops and lectures in English:

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

Quakers at Large



A Blessed Weekend with Quaker Earthcare Witness
By Geoff Garver

The Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and sustainability (or stewardship) are at the heart of Quaker faith and practice. Quakers came together around the newest of these, sustainability, in the 1980s and 1990s, with Canadian Friends affirming "unity with creation" as a testimony in 1992. Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEWF) is the main network of North American Friends who feel a strong calling to give life to this testimony and to "live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God," as the QEWF vision states.

On the long weekend of October 16-19, QEWF held its Fall gathering at Powell House, a Quaker conference and retreat centre in the rolling hills of Old Chatham, New York, near Albany. I was delighted to give one of two keynote talks. The talk I gave was entitled "Imagining a world made entirely of Territories of Life." I talked about the strong connection I have to the land where I grew up in rural Western New York and asked the Friends who had gathered to reflect on how a special place in their life nourishes their Spirit. I then explained my vision of a world made up of territories of life and asked how we can imagine communities coming together and becoming empowered to work toward that vision. You can read about the QEWF Fall gathering in the latest edition of QEWF's newsletter, *Befriending Creation*, or [here](#), and you can watch a video of my talk [here](#).

The weekend was a blessing! I drove down from Montreal on Friday through vivid Fall colors and enjoyed them again on a morning walk around Powell House's beautiful grounds on Sunday before heading home. I reconected with many Friends I've known for many years through my engagements with Earthcare. And, on Saturday, before giving my talk, I joined many of the other Friends at the gathering to participate in the No Kings demonstration in Albany. It was sheer joy to be surrounded by people of all ages and walks of life seeking truth, justice and Earthcare in these troubled times.

The World's Homeless

By Wendy Sturton

Those unfortunate who knock on our country's door and beg for asylum take their place in our minds and hearts. We imagine them living in crowded camps around the world, trekking across deserts and embarking on dangerous sea voyages. Hiding in the wheel wells of planes, or in airless containers, perching perilously on overcrowded boats in the Mediterranean, prey to the slightest wind.

In particular, refugees from the US are longing to come to Canada, but are impeded by stricter rules and the concept of "Safe Third Country" in our immigration laws. The concept denies the right of a refugee hearing to anyone passing through or fleeing a country deemed "safe". At the time the concept was introduced into Canadian law, the United States in particular was identified as a Safe Third Country. Now, with racial groups being specifically targeted and even those with papers or track to become American citizens being incarcerated and deported, it is impossible to see the U.S. as a Safe Third Country. Many trans people with American citizenship as well feel unsafe in the U.S. and face the same problem as they seek shelter in Canada. Likewise, carbon, the most basic building block of life, has disappeared from the visible universe of the Quipu filament.

A worship-sharing session centered on two excerpts by Marshall Rosenberg from his book Resolving Conflicts with Nonviolent Communication

By Gilles Harvey

Yesterday, I had the joy of participating in a Meeting for Business of the group formerly known as "Les amis isolés," under the care of the Quaker Assembly of France. We were about ten Friends, joining from different regions of France, along with one Friend from Quebec — myself.

The term "Isolated Friends" seemed to carry a negative connotation. The isolation it suggested did not reflect our lived experience, as we feel fully part of a vibrant community, gathered together through technology. The idea was to find a name that better expressed this sense of belonging, beyond geographical distance.

After the proposal was presented, we returned to silence, seeking the guidance of the Spirit. Then, one by one, Friends shared their reflections. Each spoke for the words that followed a brief pause. This insight led them to prefer one name over another.

As the sharing continued, a sense of unity emerged around the name "Connected Friends." This was accepted with joy, as it carries a threefold meaning: technological, pointing to the tools that link us; social, highlighting the bonds of fellowship; and spiritual, reminding us that we are connected to one another in the Light.

It was a beautiful experience of listening, discernment, and collective decision-making — a living testimony to the Quaker way of seeking truth together under the guidance of the Spirit.

An Exercise in Quaker Discernment

By Gilles Harvey

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Cosmic Meditations

By Gennifer Edwards

Investigations into the nature of the larger cosmos within which we live have continued unabated since the first telescopes were developed. In my own lifetime, we have built telescopes on mountaintops that use active optics so that images of increasing power and detail can be assembled, as well as launching a series of such instruments into space. The James Webb Space Telescope is the most recent example of this, and since it started receiving images in 2022, it has already led to some major breakthroughs in our understanding of the cosmos.

The design of the JWST, which favours infrared light, allows us to look much further into the early universe than we could before. We are now able to investigate the era when galaxies formed, the vast constellations of stars that harbour life as we know it today, and indeed the period when stars and planets formed. This was not possible with earlier telescopes. On Earth, much larger telescopes blur the images. There are tricks that help overcome this limitation, but there are always tradeoffs for these tricks. Collecting area determines how faint one can see objects. Ideally, one would want to build very large telescopes in space.

This introduction may seem out of place in a newsletter devoted to Quakerism, but it sets the stage for some fascinating recent discoveries that are changing how we understand what is out there in the visible universe of the Quipu filament.

The second text, in which Geoffreyen paraphrases Ken Wilber, invites us to consider our solar system as a spirituality of action, a transformative spirituality. This perspective resonates deeply with the Quaker Advices and Quaker path that we follow. This second text is a living testimony to the truth of what is out there in the visible universe of the Quipu filament.

The reflections prompted by the first text allowed me to deepen my understanding of how we may connect with the Divine Energy. Rosenberg suggests that when we establish a truly empathetic bond with another person, a force greater than ourselves flows through us. It is this energy that "re-links" us — the sustaining of the world to which one person and to what is in them is essential to our well-being. A contribution that makes us feel safe and secure within each other.

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