

wsqn

- connecting local meetings



January 2023

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter January 2023

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Frontispiece *Roads across the lava desert in Iceland.*

Where are we going? Which road?

Reflection

Be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing, give over thy own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee and be in thee and breathe in thee and act in thee; and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of Life, which is its portion.

Isaac Penington 1661 Quaker Faith and Practice
26.70

Lakota Prayer

*Wakan Tanka,
Great Mystery (Great Spirit),
Teach me how to trust my heart,
Teach me how to trust my mind,
Teach me how to trust my intuition,
Teach me how to trust my inner knowing,
The senses of my body,
The blessings of my spirit.
Teach me to trust these things
so that I may enter my Sacred Space
and love beyond my fear
and thus Walk in Balance
with the passing of each glorious Sun*

Report of West Scotland Area Meeting 8 October 2022

Clare Phillips Castle Douglas

A blended Meeting for Worship for Business was held in the Cathedral Halls, Dunblane, 08/10/2022.

I was one of several joining by video from my home in Dalbeattie near Castle Douglas. How normal this has become. It worked reasonably well – thanks to the hosts and clerks – although the small and similar-looking faces of those ‘in the room’ can still be hard to distinguish when you are on zoom.

The host town, Ayrshire and Glasgow made up most of us gathered – not many from smaller places and islands this time. I was sad to hear of Islay and Jura’s need to formally lay down their Local Meeting due to shrinking numbers but recognise their situation. They will remain a worshipping group.

We gave thanks for the long life of Peggy Bartlett and it was heartwarming to hear of Tina Cunningham and David Forsyth’s Quaker wedding held in a disused church in Kinlochmoidart. Two membership applications and two resignations were heard and accepted.

The usual matters of accounting for money and agreeing names for appointed roles (including a request for a continuing fund-raising group linked with the strategic vision and plans for Glasgow Meeting House) concluded the morning session.

In the afternoon we explored different ways WSAM Friends have been worshipping recently alongside our usual meetings. First up was the Area Meeting held on Sunday evening on zoom which started small on 29 March 2020 but now has an average of 10 gathered and seems to meet a variety of needs including attracting new members. Interestingly, we now have a midweek Meeting for Worship by zoom in Castle Douglas which has also become regular and includes at least two from out with our LM district. Being online makes these events possible but it does mean extra work for hosts and clerks so it’s good to hear about the benefits.

We heard in a short audio recording from Leilani Rabamanjara about the Wednesday night epilogue for younger Friends which also attracts a regular core group who have met for social events since lockdown ended and sometimes involves a discussion or exploration of a topic. Next, Zem Moffat told us about Time for Stillness on Tuesday mornings in Glasgow Meeting House which is now blended with a possible outreach plan to encourage local passers-by to join in.

Two more sessions – both with a theme of Quaker Spirituality – were introduced. Firstly we heard from Margaret Roy who, after becoming aware of concerns about spiritual depth of ‘normal’ worship that she and others were discerning, began a regular 10am silent zoom meeting for worship on the first

and third Sundays. It has attracted Friends of long standing including, we heard, some who have resigned their membership. Although the worship only lasts half an hour (allowing some of those attending to also go to their local meeting) knowing there will be no ministry does seem to allow for a deeper silence.

Following Margaret, Sheila Semple from Glasgow reported on the *Woodbrooke Where You Are* course *Exploring Quaker Spirituality* led by Stuart Masters which has begun with a first session in-person and online and continues over 12 weeks. 51 Friends have registered, some from smaller meetings and although there are a few technical matters being sorted out those taking part are finding Stuart's teaching inspiring, exciting and grounded in obvious knowledge.

I needed to depart at this point to meet some recently arrived Ukrainian neighbours. I was pleased to have attended most of the afternoon session and left reflecting on the plethora of ways we keep going.

Report on Area Meeting held 5th December by Zoom

Kate Gulliver, Ayrshire

The meeting got off to a slightly wobbly start due to the vagaries of Zoom. Either the Clerk was in the meeting and no-one else could join. Or the rest of the Meeting was in the meeting, and the Clerk couldn't join. But eventually 20 Friends, including the Clerk, did gather for worship to consider our business.

Jane Mitchell and Ed Tyler shared the testimony they had written to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Bobby Locke. It was a wonderful reflection of his character, commitment, and positive attitude to life. Those who knew Bobby are grateful for having done so.

Then we turned our attention to our finances (Bobby would have approved, he always took a keen interest in the financial position of the Meeting) Bronwen Currie, our Area Meeting Treasurer, gave us an update on our expenditure and currently estimates we will end the year with a surplus of around £1,590 rather than the budgeted £500 deficit. This is due to contributions being more than budgeted and expenditure, notably that on courses and training, being less than budgeted. Trustees will be considering the level of reserves at their next meeting. She also highlighted the generous support of some Friends have given towards the costs of repairs to the roof and harling on Glasgow Meeting House. This means there are sufficient funds available to meet the anticipated cost £90,000 plus fees, plus a 20% contingency in case of additional costs.

We then consider our membership matters. We heard of two applications to join in membership and duly appointed visitors to support them and report back to the Meeting, and of a Friend who is transferring their membership from North Scotland to West Scotland as work has brought them back to Glasgow. It is encouraging to see the community continuing to grow. We considered the

termination of membership of one Friend who has not attended for many years and cannot be traced, and we agreed to remove their name from our records.

One matter which demonstrated our current struggles was the appointing a Nominating Group to find Friends to serve on our Nominations Committee. Whilst everyone agrees that the work of our Nominations Committee is vital, and we need to find Friends to fill roles to keep our Meeting going, we have great difficulty finding Friends willing to serve on the Nominations Committee. Eventually three Friends agreed to form a Nominating Group and they hope to find additional Friends for the Nominating Committee in time for appointment at our January Area Meeting.

The mood picked up when we received the nominations report and heard that they had been successful in finding Friends to serve as assistant area meeting clerk and trustees for next year, and they were duly appointed.

Phillida Ball, convenor of Overseers, then outlined a possible new way of organising pastoral care within Glasgow Meeting. They are exploring the idea of fellowship groups, as used in some other area meetings, and are working out how these could connect with the current system of area meeting appointed overseers. It was pointed out that many smaller meetings already operate as fellowship groups due to their size, so the pattern is there it is a matter of adapting it to suit a much larger meeting. They hope to be able to introduce the new arrangement in the new year.

Michael Hutchinson, convenor of Elders, updated us on the issues elders have been considering at their meetings, these include the use of Zoom, what defines a local meeting, structural change and expanding the Glasgow Learning Group to become an Area Meeting Group to ensure learning opportunities are more widely available.

The meeting was finished off by short reports from other groups, Gender Violence Group and Experiment with Light Group.

I always enjoy attending Area Meeting to learn what is being done to support and grow our Quaker community. I would encourage others to attend to strengthen our connections and community.

Quake ! National news of Quakers

Recent editions have some comments on the Biodiversity COP and other responses to recent political events.

15 Dec <https://mailchi.mp/quaker.org.uk/12-aug-1496343?e=f78f5021fd>

22 Dec

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7462365700?pwd=S005RkJkYkQ0eDUzd3RmNGU4L05hdz09>

Book of Discipline Revision Committee update

November 2022

Mary Woodward

Following our hard-working but very joyful long weekend at Woodbrooke in July, your committee met at Hinsley Hall in Leeds at the beginning of October for another intense and fascinating weekend, at the end of which we all felt we had made substantial progress in our work.

It was a joy to meet and greet friends old and new, and a particular joy to welcome Pearl Johns who was appointed to the committee during lockdown and had joined us via Zoom, but this weekend was meeting us ‘in the flesh’ for the first time. A few of our number were prevented, some could only join us for part of the weekend, and some joined via Zoom – we did our best, but it became clear over the weekend that we needed very good IT equipment if these Friends were to be able both to hear everything clearly and participate fully in our work.

Having given our project manager, Linda Craig, an enormous amount of work to digest between July and October, we were delighted to meet with her again and work out our next steps. We were also very pleased to be joined for the weekend by Paul Parker – nothing like being able to get an instant response to a question for Friends House, and hugely helpful to get his input on a variety of subjects.

We continued to work on our list of topics for inclusion in the Book, and the language in which we write about them. In small groups we talked about our reactions to the proposed timetable for our work. Back together again we shared ideas about ways of working more effectively – choosing different methods for different types of work, and emphasising that no one person is expected to be brilliant at everything! It was good to hear that, should a topic group feel that a face-to-face meeting would assist the work at some stage, this would be possible. We re-iterated the importance of paying attention, at an early stage in the work, to the developments of alternative formats for ‘publishing’ our work.

It is clear that we will, over the next few years, be generating a large number of new texts, which will need approval by the whole committee before they are banked as ‘good enough’, and ultimately shared with Yearly Meeting. We hope to prevent major headaches and text traffic jams by establishing a rolling programme for this work – so that at each committee meeting we consider documents at the various different stages in their life: we will also need to consider what constitutes ‘good enough’ at these different stages. As the material begins to be ‘publication ready’ we will begin working with relevant staff members at Friends House.

We were asked to consider, and inform Linda Craig, what we each felt our skills are, and what our energy levels and availability would be as we enter the next stage of our work. This helped Linda and the clerks discern who would be working on which of our next set of topics – Conflict, Quaker Spiritual experience, Worship, and Membership. An Accessibility Working Group was also set up to address the question of creating accessible content – including liaising with the Quaker Disability Equality Group. I am co-convening the group writing about Worship – another intangible, ineffable, indescribable topic. . .

Beginning sharing our work with Friends! We had agreed in July that we would aim to begin sharing our work by sending draft text on Nominations and Marriage to Meeting for Sufferings [MfS] for their consideration. Our clerks will report to MfS in December, and will announce that these two texts will be shared with MfS reps and be discussed at their meeting in March 2023. We had also agreed that we would wish to accompany the texts with an audio recording of them – demonstrating our commitment to accessibility and the diverse ways in which we can communicate with Friends.

Following the October meeting, the Communicating with Friends [CwF] group met to discuss both the sharing of the work and how we would deal with the responses we would receive. A sub-group of CwF was set up [which included myself] to work out how we would make the audio recordings of the text – Friends House had given us plenty of advice but hadn't offered to do the recording. We were delighted that Jess Hubbard-Bailey was eager to be involved with this project – her experience of recording Young Friends podcasts was invaluable – and that this marked her emergence from her 'period of retirement' during which her son Walter was born. It's been a steep learning curve for some of us, but about half the committee recorded one or both of the Nominations and Marriage texts and sent the recordings to Jess, who produced a lovely, lively patchwork of voices – one as the 'voice of the book' for each text and different voices for each of the quotations used to illustrate the texts.

At the same time, CwF agreed that we should offer some information sessions for MfS reps, in which they could ask us questions for clarification and we could indicate what would be helpful feedback for our work. I didn't feel confident about running these sessions, but I was more than happy to offer to do the 'nuts and bolts' work of finding suitable dates and participants: not a simple task, but one I'm delighted to have completed!

To sum up, the key messages from this meeting are

- *We have reviewed and expanded our list of topics for the new book;*
- *Guidelines for those writing text for the new book have been agreed, based on our experiences on the journey to date;*
- *We have set up groups to work on the following topics: conflict in Quaker communities, Quaker spiritual experience, membership, worship, and also a group to look at accessible formats for our content;*

- *Two drafts of topics are being shared with Friends, after our report to Meeting for Sufferings in December;*
- *We have agreed a timetable for our ongoing work, which will also form part of our report to Meeting for Sufferings.*

We next meet, via Zoom, at the end of January. As ever, we value your prayers and support – we are doing the work on your behalf, and can't do it without you!

Meeting for Sufferings Report 1 October 2022 and 3 December 2022

Elaine Millar, Dunblane

DISCERNMENT

I want more Friends to know what happens at Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), that archaic name I heard as a teen, but didn't understand: I have a key memory, my family eating tea together after mum returned from MfS in London, and her telling us how an item of business (I've forgotten what) had changed her mind and her heart during the process of discernment. She wept as she spoke. And I picked up that Quaker Meetings can change you, and Meeting for Sufferings can be transformative.

Saturday 1 October was my first experience of attending MfS as West of Scotland alternate representative. I was nervous, so I did my preparation, carefully reading everything sent out in advance, joining the pre-meetings to consider the agenda, first with Scottish reps and then with UK wide reps and, above all, taking time to be quiet and still and open.

My report will highlight the discernment rather than the chronology of our agenda, although mention must be made early on of Elizabeth Allen's report from General Meeting for Scotland – or, as she prefers, Quakers in Scotland - focusing on the people rather than the structure. This was received with ministry that included words such as “enlightening”, “inspirational” and “visionary”, and so it was. Please read it, along with the minutes, via this link [mfs-2022-10-follow-up-package \(quaker.org.uk\)](https://www.quaker.org.uk/mfs-2022-10-follow-up-package)

The review group for Meeting for Sufferings offered an interim report, where stage 1 of reporting took place in March and stage 2 will be in December, and where three recent online workshops fed into the process. These were open to all Friends and advertised in Quake – a good place to keep you up to date with the latest goings on for Quakers. In brief the review team are learning that Friends believe:

- Spirit led discernment is central to Quakerism.
- Not enough of it goes on, carried out by too few.
- The process of discernment is not explained or understood well enough

It occurs to me, thankfully, that all this is fixable.

Another Report highlighted some of the overlaps between our structures of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees, where the potential

for creativity within the resulting tensions is not fully harnessed. Again this observation points to positive ways forward. Less clear (yet) is how to bridge the gaps that yawn between local meetings and area meetings and YM, MfS and BYM Trustees.

The Sustainability Monitoring Group reported on our efforts to be more low-carbon, sustainable communities, where it is noted the language about these matters and our approach to them has moved from climate change to climate justice, see p.8 of [mfs-2022-10-agenda-and-papers \(quaker.org.uk\)](https://www.quaker.org.uk/mfs-2022-10-agenda-and-papers).

The 'main-course' for our discernment came in the item about the appointment of attenders to central committees – last reviewed in 1992 when it was decided that except in exceptional circumstances only members should serve. I recommend the report from the group tasked with exploring this, p30-35 of the previous link. There followed much ministry, much thought, many words, perhaps too little silence and stillness and openness to the spirit. The realisation dawned that the issue beneath the question before us is about membership, not about the qualities that make us suitable for service. It was finally minuted, "we have not reached unity". I was disappointed there had been no breakthrough moment of the like described by my mother some fifty years ago – I wondered if we had failed – and yet I also felt exhilaration, knowing that the point where we had 'not reached unity' would have been, in any other type of business meeting, the point where a vote would have happened, that compromise offered by democracy. Instead we will continue to seek the right way forward – the Quaker way - and that will take more time, patience and further opportunities for our discernment.

One opportunity came early in December at our next Meeting for Sufferings Here is the link to the minutes and other papers [mfs-2022-12-follow-up-package \(quaker.org.uk\)](https://www.quaker.org.uk/mfs-2022-12-follow-up-package)

There are two **HEADLINES**:

- **"We ask all area meetings to cease using the term overseer and to select another suitable term in its place."** This minute reflects the culmination of national discernment over a number of years, recognising the term 'overseer' is burdened with historical connotations to do with the hierarchy and oppression of the slave trade, but also other industries and contexts also. When searching for a new term we are encouraged to focus on the service being offered – one that reflects the thought, care and friendship - rather than the terminology.
- **Appointing attenders to central committee service:** after the October meeting, Arrangements Group for MfS was tasked with considering the broader matter of Quaker membership. We accepted their proposal to ask members of Meeting for Sufferings, both individually and in their area meetings, to consider the following questions:
 - Why do we have membership?
 - What is it for?

- Is it still necessary?
 - If yes, what form(s) could it take?
- The work of discernment is before us, Friends.

PS!

When I agreed to be alternate rep for Meeting for Sufferings, a mess of feelings hit, not least that I won't know or understand what's happening and I won't be worthy of the role. I'm always greatly comforted by Quaker Faith & Practice 12:08, which describes a Friend in the same tizzy as I found myself, who is gently told by an Elder, "My dear, we have to take what we can get." A helpful reminder that it's not 'all about me' but rather a willingness to serve, to turn up faithfully, to be open to the spirit and to do the best you can with what you have.

Report on 'Clerking in a Nutshell' course

Edie Phoenix, Castle Douglas

Is it possible to learn about the many aspects of the role of Clerk to a Quaker local meeting in a day? I suggest not. But the one-day zoom course that I recently attended had a very good try.

Run by Woodbrooke Learning and Research Centre, 'Clerking in a Nutshell' is an excellent stand-alone course in itself. We introduced ourselves, listened to people with experience, and then split up into small groups to share our thoughts. Or just listen.

If you are thinking of becoming a Clerk, or are already one, you are encouraged to undertake the much longer 'Being a Quaker Clerk' course as well.

Clerking is not a role I feel adequately suited for but I did find the course very interesting. I can thoroughly recommend it to anyone wishing to know more about the Quaker way.

New Centre Co-ordinator (Warden) at Glasgow Meeting House.

Glasgow Friends are delighted to have appointed a half time building coordinator, Lori Sullivan who started work just before Christmas. She has a lot of experience working with groups and managing venues, but is largely new to Friends so she is working hard to get her head round who we all are and how we operate. She will usually be in the building in the day on Wednesdays and Fridays. With the help of our assistant warden Fern the building is also open on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings as well as on Sundays."

YFGM (Young Friends General Meeting)

Romy Neale Guasch, Dunblane

Hosted at the lovely Friargate Quaker Meeting House in York, YFGM (Young Friends General Meeting) ran over Halloween weekend from Friday the 28th to Sunday the 30th of October. The city was lively, with people of all ages walking at night as if it was daytime and singing in the streets. I neglected to count the exact number of people at YFGM, but I heard the number 70 thrown out by committee members at one point. A significant number were newcomers, mostly younger Friends making the jump from JYF (Junior Young Friends).

After two years of pandemic restrictions, YFGM was finally in-person again. The general feeling was one of joyful reunion. I questioned the need for designated early bedtime and midnight rooms when everyone was catching up on lost time into the early hours of the morning.

Special interest groups included a (rather wet) walk around York City Walls, a visit from a representative of the George Gorman Memorial Fund (which supports the ministry of Friends aged 18 to 35), and an exploration of Moravian Side Wound Theology.

Among big notices were the announcement of an upcoming original musical by Gray Wood and the organisation of a new event for Friends aged 18 to 25. The event will take place at Bournville Quaker Meeting House in Birmingham around Christmas. For more information, email Sammy Gilbert at the following address: sjgilb@proton.me.

On Sunday, we shared in meeting for worship with the members and attenders of Friargate Quaker Meeting. In business meeting, several Friends, including myself, were newly appointed to the YFGM organising committee. The next YFGM will be in February. There are murmurings that the next YFGM will be further north than York, so young Scottish Friends aged 18 to 35, this is your chance to come along if you haven't before!

Many thanks to West of Scotland Area Meeting for supporting my journey to YFGM; I had a lovely time!

ICHIWAH

The Quakers have a delightful phase, "When you pray, move your feet." Expect the answer through you – in guidance – and direction – through your consciousness. Get busy being what you have affirmed.

West Scotland Area Meeting Woodbrooke Course

Where You Are Spirituality Course led by Stuart Masters

Margaret Munro, Dunblane

The fact that I offered to write a report of this introductory day tells its own story. I felt I had come alive again spiritually.

Stuart was an excellent teacher in that he was absolutely clear, repeated the main points so that taking notes was easy, was enthusiastic and supportive and had an endearing sense of humour. We took part in a range of learning processes, full plenary, personal reflection, including worship, and small group discussion. There were about 25 of us at Glasgow meeting House and about the same number online.

A crucial theme was discernment, our ability to know what within us is being prompted by the Spirit of love and truth and what is coming from elsewhere, our upbringing, life experiences for example.

Firstly we learnt about the experiences of early Friends and how the tension between contemplative and charismatic Quakers developed, a tension still evident today when we have universalist along with traditional Christian Friends, and programmed meetings with ministers in other parts of the world.

Secondly we learnt about guidance in worship and other spiritual practices. We were reminded that worship stems from “worthship”, when we are giving our attention to what really matters with the hope of spreading that inner conviction outwards to transform the world. In vocal ministry we allow the spirit to flow through us, and were reminded only to speak “if we can improve the silence.”

The third session early afternoon took the form of mini clearness meetings in groups, where corporate discernment is practised. A focus person shares a challenging personal situation and is helped to unravel the tangled threads of that situation by gentle questioning to help clarification. We were reminded that the group is not trying to find a solution but to be alongside the person to help them get nearer to the spirit’s guidance. I was the focus person in my group and found it a very powerful uplifting experience where I felt literally the focus of Love and Light.

Finally we studied the challenge of “letting our lives speak”. “There is no part of ourselves or our relationships where God is not present.” (Harvey Gillman) Day by day how do we respond to inner guidance? Here I found my small group inspirational. One member was belittling herself for changing jobs several times because of her principles, and comparing herself unfavourably with her grandfather who had been a conscientious objector. We felt that she was

unaware of how much courage she had shown by her actions and I for one found a new meaning to the term “conscientious objection” which I had always interpreted as refusal to fight in a military sense. Another member of the group recommended to me a publication of the booklet by young Quakers, “Living our beliefs” when I admitted to finding it difficult to share with grandchildren my Quaker experience.

Altogether a spiritually alive day and I look forward eagerly to the 12 week course- that is if I can cope with the necessary technology!

Renewing our Faith Mary Troup

It struck me powerfully this afternoon how contributions in our Discussion Forum can resonate like ministry in a gathered Meeting for Worship. I had not read the previous posts from other groups before posting the reflection from the Wednesday early evening group. When I did read them, I rejoiced in the threads of thought being woven together in a rich tapestry.

Further to this, I recalled how the wonderful closing Minute from the Living Witness Gathering at Woodbrooke in August 2022 notes that “the last time Quakerism renewed itself was the 1895 conference which became the basis of 20th century liberal Quakerism. Quakers had to reorientate their faith...” Now, as we face the Climate Emergency and work for Climate Justice, the Minute suggests that we are being called upon, once again, to renew our faith. “[As] we open ourselves to this pregnant sense of the present, Quakers and Living Witness can be midwives of the spirit. The universe is participatory, there are no bystanders. Our commitment to climate justice encourages us to see everything we do as something which is of god or against god. We are called to be whole with creation and act on the Truth which we find.”

I have been heartened, through lockdown and beyond, by the increased opportunities to meet for worship with Friends, both locally, nationally, and internationally. These times for worship and stillness give me a much-needed framework to help me to strengthen my spiritual practice – often at the dawning of the day. This morning, at worship between 7 – 7.30am, I observed the change from darkness to light as the day dawned and heard the curlew’s song (shared over Zoom!) calling us to be at one with each other. And my heart and soul were filled with gratitude. Can we, in our Quaker family, be whole with creation, and can we be midwives of the spirit, acting on the Truth which we find?

We have fallen out of alignment with the deepest truths within us. How are we to awaken again to the sacredness at the heart of all life, the sacredness that is also at the heart of our own being? Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul

Quaker Concerns

Concern of Population Working Group Chris Ballance

I have a deep concern regarding the concern of the Population Working Group (p22 of August WSQN). I agree with their starting analysis; that the drivers of the climate and nature crisis are “population and consumption (affluence).”

But the working group focuses on the first, while ignoring the second. This leads them to the conclusion that “Empowering women is the most effective way to reduce fertility rates and achieve a sustainable population size.” This only looks at half of the problem – and the less important half at that.

When my oldest child was 18 months old he had, statistically, been responsible for producing the same amount of carbon as a person in Bangladesh produces in their lifetime.

He’s now 16 so those stats may be out of date, but the principle will be the same. So the problem is not solved by giving women in Bangladesh (or other poor countries) better access to contraception to reduce population sizes in the third world.

The problem is us in our developed world, and our rates of consumption. That’s not to say that educating and empowering women in the third world is not a Good Thing – obviously it is – it’s just not going to solve any climate crisis anytime soon.

The article goes on to claim “Educating girls and securing women’s rights to high quality family planning would be the most powerful combined solution to climate change”. As most women and girls in the rich world already have at least some access to education and family planning, this assertion suggests that the climate crisis is caused by uneducated women in the poor world. This is verging uncomfortably close to racism.

Sorry guys, the uncomfortable truth is that it’s us that’s the problem, and the only solution lies in us in the rich world living simply that others may simply live. Educating us middle class white folk to consume less is the most powerful solution.

Climate Change and Sustainability

“Climate justice is...”

This Autumn, [Interfaith Glasgow](#) (IG) delivered three dialogue events exploring the meaning of climate justice and the ways in which it intersects with other crucial justice issues. Made possible through Lottery funding, these events explored climate justice through the lens of food, gender and finance.

Interfaith Glasgow is a Scottish charity that promotes and facilitates friendship-building, dialogue, and cooperation between people from diverse religion and belief backgrounds.

Responding to deep concern felt across all faith and belief communities, facilitating interfaith cooperation with respect to the climate crisis has been a growing focus of our work, particularly since Glasgow was selected to host the COP26 Climate Summit which took place this time last year.

This series was inspired by the [Global Day of Action](#) in Glasgow, which saw diverse faith leaders and community members walking together behind one banner calling for 'Climate Justice', as part of a 100,000 strong march through the city centre.

The various banners at last year's march – called for migrant justice, racial justice, financial justice, gender justice, justice for indigenous people, for workers, and so on – because climate justice is *multifaceted* and, if we're to move towards it, we will need to act on multiple fronts.

Diverse faith and belief communities are already active in supporting people affected by unjust systems but they're not always aware of how these injustices relate to, and stand to be exacerbated by, the climate crisis.

The "Climate Justice is..." series provided an opportunity to deepen our understanding, exploring in some detail the various dimensions and demands of climate justice; and how we can come together to take transformative action.

We partnered with inspiring organisations whose work we admired from afar and some of whom we'd already worked with before to explore Food Justice with [Nourish Scotland](#), Gender Justice with [Women's Environmental Network](#) and Financial Justice with [Faith for the Climate](#) and [Quakers in Britain](#). The fact that the dialogues were online meant that attendees joined from all corners of the globe, from Glasgow, Scotland, Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania. Each event included speakers from both the Global North and Global South who brought a deeper understanding of the issues and how they intersect with not just food, gender, financial justice but also with racial and migrant justice.

At "Climate Justice is Food Justice", participants gained insights into the nature of our complex global food system which is driven by profit at the expense of the welfare of workers, the land and animals - as well as being a key source of carbon emissions. [ISKON Scotland](#) shared their exemplary model of sustainable food growing practices intimately linked with people, community and earth care. Participants heard an argument for de-commoditizing food and had the

opportunity to reflect and dialogue on the complexity and the lack of compassion in the food system. As a result, our audience committed to actions such as supporting local food producers, growing vegetables, raising awareness about processed food and eating more plant-based food.

Women's experiences have historically been marginalised and have tended to be overlooked within climate change discourse. Our event "Climate Justice is Gender Justice" highlighted:

- How women are disproportionately affected in the environmental crisis due to structural gender inequality, which further intersects with inequalities of race and disability
- Injustice and patriarchal structures at the heart of the global economic system, which is driving climate breakdown
- Examples of fantastic work, which seeks to include women in climate solutions such as Wen's feminist [New Green Deal](#), Adenike Oladosu's I Lead Climate Action Initiative, the [Climate Sisters Project](#) and Anika Ali's inspiring podcast ["Sustaining the Movement"](#).

Our final event explored financial justice, and taking place shortly after the COP27 summit, speakers reflected on how the COP27 negotiations were both a step forward (for loss and damage) and a huge disappointment (on everything else). Asad Rehman of [War on Want](#) laid bare the deeply embedded colonialist structures within our financial and economic systems, which have been developed at the expense of countries in the Global South. Abigail Kima, Climate Activist and Host of [Hali Hewa Podcast](#) shared how Africa is responsible for less of 4% of global emissions and only 0.5% of the historical emissions and yet faces multiple climate disasters. Far from receiving the reparations required much of the continent is crippled by debt. Abigail made attendees aware of the impact of climate breakdown on indigenous communities in Kenya and the importance of sharing and telling personal climate stories. You can hear more on this topic in her podcast series [here](#) Dr Shanon Shah of Faith for the Climate spoke about Loss and Damage finance as a focus for the activist work of the [Make COP Count Group](#) targeted at the UK Government in support and solidarity of the Global South. Dr Shah talked about the importance of telling it how it is: sharing the stories of real human beings and their losses as a way to cut through the technical language surrounding Loss and Damage. Speakers also shared how they have found the [Polluters Pay](#) Principle helpful in communicating the argument for loss and damage financing: "if you broke it, you pay for it".

Each dialogue included facilitated breakout room discussion where people of faith and none were able to meet one another and unpack the information shared. Guided by our breakout room guidelines and good practice for dialoguing, attendees heard other points of view and new ideas, some

becoming connected to local initiatives and how they could become involved. There was knowledge sharing, friendship building, fellowship and solidarity. Resources such as Climate Outreach's [Britain Talks Climate, Quakers in Britain climate & economic justice resources](#), Faith for the Climate [faith resources](#) and [ACT Climate Labs](#) were shared as a way to access reliable information, engage the public about the climate justice issue and a starting point for those who want to have conversations with others who share different opinions and have different information about climate action.

Participants experienced an increased sense of solidarity with others, empowerment to take action, motivation to engage further in climate justice-related activities, explore how their community could take action and make lifestyle changes.

Speakers from diverse faith and belief backgrounds ended each event with a spiritual reflection on the theme and sharing insights including on the importance of seeing the bigger picture and we are all interconnected and interdependent and how self-transformation brings hope for world transformation.

For more information about our climate work, please visit [Interfaith Glasgow](#) or contact **Satya Dunning, Project Leader** at Satya.Dunning@interfaithglasgow.org

SCOTTISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS FORUM COP27 REPORT

Adrian Shaw, Eco Congregation Scotland 7 December 2022

Cop 27: What Was It All About?

Cop 27, held in Egypt in November 2022, was the latest in the long series of UN conferences (the Twenty Seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change) that seek to address the global challenge of climate change. The scale of the event was daunting with reports of over 30,000 participants. While smaller than Glasgow this is still a huge number with delegates from countries great and small, advisers, media, lobbyists, and campaigners. The agenda and associated reports were complex and the stakes could not have been higher. Unlike Cop 26 in Glasgow where many faith groups from Scotland were able to participate in fringe events community participation in Egypt was more limited. There was extensive media coverage, for example from the [BBC](#) and detailed daily reporting from [Carbon Brief](#).

Headline Outcomes

[Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) summarized the outcome in three bullet points.

- Loss and Damage was on the agenda for the first time, and positively, agreement was reached to establish a dedicated new fund for this
- Lack of firm commitment to immediately phase out all fossil fuels sets us on course for extremely dangerous levels of heating and will result in escalating Loss and Damage debt owed
- The Scottish Government has continued to show welcome leadership on Loss and Damage on the international stage, but must commit to urgent new action to slash Scotland's emissions and meet domestic climate targets by making polluters pay for the damage they are creating. Committing to a just phase out of oil and gas is essential to this.

Loss and Damage

Each Cop revisits the same themes: mitigation (what can be done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for example by phasing out fossil fuels); adaptation (how to adapt to a changing climate); and loss and damage (how do rich countries support and finance poorer countries who contribute least to the problem but are hit hardest by climate change). Countries worse affected by climate change have lobbied for many years but richer countries have been reluctant to accept responsibility for loss and damage as it could commit them to enormous payments over years to come. The UN for example has since 2009 set a target for rich counties to pay \$100 billion a year to help poorer countries deal with adaptation – a target that has not yet been met.

The new commitment to provide support to deal with loss and damage is in addition to payments for adaptation. It was a significant achievement to persuade the Cop to agree to set up a new [Loss and Damage Fund](#). How it will be set up, how it will be financed and how it will be managed and monitored are challenges yet to be resolved.

Phasing Out Fossil Fuels

Progress on emissions reductions was disappointing with well reported blocking moves from oil producing countries and it was also reported that there were over [600 fossil fuel lobbyists](#) at the Cop – twice the number of representatives from indigenous communities. Oil and gas companies are benefitting from high energy prices and continue to invest tens of billions of dollars in new oil and gas fields while maintaining that they are concerned about climate change. The target of limited global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius remains on 'life support' according to [Alok Sharma](#), the retiring president of Cop 26. This viability of this target has always been open to question and on current trends it will not be achieved. Emissions from all sources (including fossil fuels and land use) are still running at over [40 billion tonnes](#) of carbon dioxide each year pointing to likely temperature rises of over two degrees Celsius. Even if current commitments made by national governments are put into effect temperatures are still likely to rise by 1.8 degrees Celsius.

Scottish Government

Nicola Sturgeon received [international coverage](#) by committing Scottish Government to fund loss and damage projects, perhaps embarrassing the UK Government in the process. At home the Scottish Government has a good record on promoting wind power and in supporting the phased run down of North Sea oil and gas production. However most homes in Scotland remain dependent on gas central heating and progress in switching to low carbon alternatives (heat pumps or district heating schemes for example) is very slow. [Emissions from transport](#), now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland, remain high due to increases in road traffic. Public transport services are less carbon intensive but remain poorly coordinated and sometimes unreliable. [Agriculture](#), another large source of greenhouse gas emissions, has been relatively slow to change with a continued dependence on livestock farming, the principal source of agricultural emissions in Scotland. For many farmers in upland areas there are few alternatives other than forestry, raising difficult challenges of adjustment.

Faith groups

Faith groups are represented at the Cop but are not part of the negotiating process and don't always receive as much media coverage as other players. Faith leaders [called for action](#), but it is uncertain to what extent they were able to bring effective pressure to bear on the discussions.

Henrik Grape of the World Council of Churches expressed [disappointment](#) at the outcome pointing to the 'massive gap between what science tells us we must do and the political will to do what we must'. While faith groups are marginal to the Cop negotiations, they are central to the process of change. Faith groups are communities that can promote and facilitate change among their own members according to their own traditions of caring for each other and caring for creation. This work does not take place at Cops, it is ongoing and builds the conditions where faith groups can encourage political leaders to have the confidence to do what must be done. The Cop is the annual display of progress (or the lack of it) but the real work goes on locally and nationally all year. In that work faith groups across Scotland have a challenging but essential role to play.

I recently bought a cleaning cloth from my local Wilko Store which said on the packaging that it was an ECO cloth. However when I got home and examined it properly, I found that it was made of material that is very damaging to the environment. This was obviously a bit of 'Greenwashing'. I wrote to Wilko and asked on what basis they could call this product 'ECO'? In reply they said it meant that it was 'economical' because it could be used either wet or dry. I wasn't buying that so I did some personal research by asking lots of people what they thought 'eco' would mean on a product. As you would expect, without exception each person said 'good for the environment' or 'not harmful to the environment'. So I wrote to Wilko again with the results. After some time, much to my surprise I had a further email which said that the word ECO had been removed from the product. This little story demonstrates that there is always something, however small, we can do to promote truth and integrity! **Anne Macarthur, Castle Douglas**

Feminist Green New Deal

You have no doubt heard of the Green New Deal proposed to tackle climate change. What is it?

Green New Deal (GND) *(taken from Wikipedia)*

Proposals call for public policy to address climate change along with achieving other social aims like job creation and reducing economic inequality. The name refers back to the New Deal, a set of social and economic reforms and public works projects undertaken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to the Great Depression. The Green New Deal combines Roosevelt's economic approach with modern ideas such as renewable energy and resource efficiency.

In the UK, the Green New Deal Group and the New Economics Foundation produced the A Green New Deal report asking for a Green New Deal as a way out of the Global Financial Crisis back in 2008, demanding a reform of the financial and tax sectors and a revolution of the energy sector in the country.

What would a Feminist Green New Deal look like? Briefing from the UK Women's Budget Group and Wen (Women's Environmental Network) 2020

Green New Deal aims typically include:

- Decarbonising the economy
- Democratising the economy
- Creating fair green jobs
- Preserving the natural environment
- Reform of finance and banking systems
- Community organising and ownership
- International responsibilities to repay debts and inequalities

Gender-equality priorities include:

- Redressing economic and social disadvantages faced by women
- Changing social norms of gender at home and at work to share and value care
- Increasing women's representation in all arenas of public life
- Ending violence against women and girls

In bringing a Feminist Green New Deal to the UK, Wen and The Women's Budget Group seek to ensure gender and racial equality are at the heart of plans to tackle the climate crisis. Here are some key points:

GREEN JOBS A gender equal Green New Deal should also be wary of reproducing occupational segregation and take steps to enrol women in STEM jobs crucial to a green economy including providing subsidies or other incentives (including paid education leave). . . Encourage women and girls into male-dominated green sectors promoted by the GND, as well as encouraging boys and men into the already green caring sectors

SHARING CARE Recognise that paid care jobs are low carbon jobs and that they redress gender inequality. Women jobs ought to be paid at real living wages, securely contracted and unionised. Invest in policies that promote redistribution of unpaid care. Consider forms of Universal Basic Income or

Universal Basic Services to guarantee everyone minimum living standards and recognise and remunerate care as work.

CONSIDER GENDER IN RETHINKING FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION The way we source food is contributing to climate change via food miles and fossil fuel emissions. It is also predominantly the responsibility of women in heterosexual households. Reconfiguring food means taking account of the extent to which women take responsibility for the procurement and preparation of food by: • Balancing recommendations for greater food self-reliance with recognition of the gendered, unpaid and low-paid labour involved in producing and providing food. • Supporting and developing sustainable small businesses that save time and reduce domestic work through mass preparation and distribution of locally grown food

DEMOCRACY AND OWNERSHIP Key to restructuring our society is changing how governance works so that it involves communities. Women, especially BAME and disabled women, are still underrepresented in all areas of political life and rectifying this is crucial to democratising the economy.

Inclusive participation is central to localising power and resources.

GENDER EQUALITY SHOULD BE A GND GOAL

- Make socio-economic equality (of gender, race, disability etc.) a key goal of any green new deal framework and enrol feminist thinkers in co-creation of planning and policy.
- Work to abolish violence against women and girls as it continues to exist in the UK and around the world as well as supporting victims/survivors with sustainably funded services including those by and for BAME women.
- Promote a culture shift towards valuing care as foundational to the environment and economy.

Much summarized from paper by Sherilyn MacGregor and Maeve Cohen for the UK Women's Budget Group's Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy. The Women's Budget Group and Wen (Women's Environmental Network) are planning more detailed work in this area. For more information contact jenna.norman@wbg.org.uk.

Glasgow Climate Café

Our next meeting is on Thursday 19th January in the Meeting House. No doubt there are lots of other activities you are engaged in, Thanks for taking action in whatever way is right for you. Do come along and share your news and get and give support.

Meet in person from 5.30 in Elizabeth Fry for a light snack and catchup, and in the Meeting Room and on Zoom from 6.30 till 8.00.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84356198397?pwd=UzBqbnlmdlFEREwybzAyTldjS25kdz09>

Meeting ID: 843 5619 8397

Passcode: 694945

Gender-based Violence

Our group has been discussing our way forward. We have done much work over the past few years disseminating information and identifying issues. There are many issues and so many groups and organisations working on them. What do we Quakers have to offer?

At our last meeting we decided to concentrate on Domestic violence in a Quaker context. Domestic violence is not merely physical - it takes many forms. One of our members is deeply distressed by the hot spot of trafficking that is Glasgow so you will hear more of that.

We continue to reach out to support other groups working in the field. We welcomed Mike Nellis of QCJN to speak to us and share that group's concern for alternative to prison, especially restorative justice and the place of trauma in 'offending'. Send an e mail to WSAM.gbv@gmail.com to receive a copy of our latest leaflet on weaponising sexual violence.

Sexual assaults' hidden costs

HEALTH CARE | People seeking emergency care following a sexual assault may also be burdened with a hefty medical bill. Looking at nearly 113,000 emergency department visits in 2019 for sexual violence, researchers found that nearly 16% of those assaulted didn't have health insurance and had to pay, on average, nearly \$3700. Pregnant individuals who were sexually assaulted incurred the highest charges, of more than \$4500, on average. Such expenses may discourage people from reporting their experience or seeking help, warn the authors of the study, published this week in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. They also write that low-income women and girls—who are disproportionately subject to sexual violence—may be particularly hard hit by the medical charges.

This piece appeared in Science. Estimates of numbers of sexual offences are likely to be underestimates particularly among poor and marginalised women in USA and other countries lacking a NHS type service.

On the Significance of Religion in Violence Against Women and Girls

This book will be launched on Tuesday, 31st January 2023 The zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85191433623?pwd=MzdxZzFqSGxhcTBacjVkJUJhR2RDQT09>

We are delighted to invite you to an online launch of the book: "On the Significance of Religion in Violence Against Women and Girls" by Elisabet Le Roux from Stellenbosch University and Sandra Pertek from University of Birmingham.

On the Significance of Religion in Violence Against Women and Girls explores two sides of religion: the ways in which it contributes to violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the ways it counters it. Recognising the very real impact of religion on the lives of women and girls, it prioritises experiences and learnings from empirical research and of practitioners, and their activities at grassroots-level, to better understand the nature and root causes of VAWG. Drawing on research done in Christian and Muslim communities in various fragile settings with high religiosity, the volume avoids simplistically assigning blame to any one religion, instead engaging with the commonalities of how religion and religious actors influence norms and behaviours that impact VAWG.

Did you see this in the Scotsman?? *Edited by Margaret Roy*

<https://www.scotsman.com/regions/glasgow-and-strathclyde/woman-trafficked-and-sold-ps10000-outside-scottish-primark-541910>

Woman trafficked and 'sold for £10,000 outside Scottish Primark'

A Slovakian woman was sold for £10,000 in Glasgow city centre, a court was told yesterday.

A Slovakian woman was sold for £10,000 in Glasgow city centre, a court was told yesterday.

The incident happened outside Primark on Glasgow's Argyle Street

The 24-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons, claimed at the High Court in Glasgow that she was bought by a Nepalese man called Nel outside Primark in Argyle Street.

She was giving evidence at the High Court in Glasgow on Thursday, in the trial of XXXXXXXXXXXX who deny trafficking women into Scotland for prostitution and slavery.

It would appear that the women were brought over from Slovenia in 2014 when 4-5 months pregnant She was then held in "slavery or servitude" between 2011 and 2015. In court she claimed that £10,000 was handed over so she became the 'wife' of Nel. She entered Primark with him to buy clothes before being taken to his home where she was expected to sleep with him. She did not go to the police for fear of her family back in Slovenia – she was the mother of two children. And when he was out she was locked in. Eventually she jumped out of a window.

Previously she was made to sleep with men for money – a practice called hitchhiking.

All four accused, who live in Govanhill, Glasgow, are alleged of 'conspiring to commit the crime of trafficking people for exploitation and trafficking in prostitution.'

They are also charged with compelling women to work as prostitutes and managing a brothel. They are alleged to have told one woman they would make her homeless unless she worked as a prostitute and threatened another with violence.

The charge claims they did "discuss plans to purchase or obtain control and ownership of women" from Slovakia and elsewhere in the UK.

The accusations are said to have been "aggravated by a connection with serious and organised crime".

The trial before Lord Beckett continues.

Well did you know this happened in Glasgow?

Smalls for All - still collecting

In September 2019, we received a pantastic 6,496 parcels of underwear from our wonderful supporters. THIS September, we received only 2,318 – and demand is higher than ever 😞. As a result, we're running low on pants again. Can YOU help?

Please buy and send a pack of pants to us at Five Sisters Business Park, Westwood, West Calder EH55 8PN. Or use our Amazon wish list [<http://bit.ly/wish-sfa>]. To find out more, please see <http://bit.ly/underwear-sfa>. Thank you! Maria 🗨️📦👤 #gift dignity

The Lassies o' the Pulpit

The lassies don the robes the day tho' eyebrows duly raised,
People o' the gentler sex they cry "An' may the Lord be praised !"
We've heard enough fae rantin' men wha telt us we're a' damned,
But this wis no' the guid Lord's w'y harsh words are shiftin' sand.
He blessed the children in oor care an' said tae be like them,
"Ye shall no' enter heaven's gate this lesson ye mon learn!"

We herm an' we abuse oor weans then claim tae serve the Lord,
But Christ still weeps a'fore us a' an' damns each thoughtless word!
There is nae place in pulpit noo for angry blustrin' rant,
"Pit doon the clenchet fist!" he says tae men o' fear an' cant.
"Bring forth tae me thy children dear fur each wan's named in
heaven,
An herm them no'!" the Holy cry cams doon tae us like leaven.

"Whit wid ye hiv me dae wi' them? the same as it Dunblane?
How dare ye think that I would deem thit bairnies feel sik pain?"
He tried tae teach them lang ago, but few mon hear his words,
Their ears were closed, their eyes were blind, their fantasies absurd!
He blessed the children tae oor care, a teachin' sae divine,
"Forbid them no' " his Holy words ring doon thru' space an' time.

Fair Eve she stauns in pulpit noo, 'cause men hae plain forgot,
They canny see whit Eve knows true, an' teachin's noo her lot.
For centuries we've fumed an' fussed an' warred oan wan an' ither,
Little knowin' that we kill, the wan wha' is oor brither.
The Lord fulfils, in gentle ways, a' purposes devine,
Fair lassies 'o the pulpit hae cam upon their time.

When the first female Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Susan Brown,
visited the island of Skye many parishioners stayed away from worship rather
than hear a woman preach the Gospel. WJB

White Privilege

Insidious Slavery

Bill Bingham, Glasgow

It seems almost beyond comprehension to realise that 700,000 men in America killed one another around the same time that the Quaker Meeting House in Glasgow was being built. This madness occurred over the issue of whether one man had the right to 'own' (enslave) his fellow man. It is also almost incredible to realise that each opposing army prayed to the same god for victory ! The Confederate general Robert E. Lee later declared that the greatest mistake he ever made was in choosing a military career. Lee ended his days as a school teacher and his estate at Arlington is now the cemetery where 60,000 (average age nineteen) American soldiers, who died in an illegal war in Viet Nam, are memorialised. Lee himself was the owner of 200 slaves, and the great American champion of liberty, George Washington, was also a slave-owner. However, it must be also be understood that some of the worst traders in human misery were in fact not white men. Africans from the north of the 'dark continent', specifically the Barbary Coast, were actively engaged in this diabolical trade. This particular group of human traffickers raided the coasts of Britain and Ireland. Cornwall was particularly exposed to this vicious trade. The slave-trade therefore had nothing whatsoever to do with 'racism', it had more to do with *human iniquity!*

Recent research on the Highland Clearances reveals that the purchase of 63 estates in the West Highlands and Islands were likely to have been funded by direct and indirect benefits from the slave trade and this represents 5% of the landmass of Scotland. People were moved off the land and were replaced by sheep. The 'empty glens' in the North of Scotland now stand testament to this social injustice. Mammon was served, and the Good Shepherd was simply not involved. And some of those Highlanders (and Lowlanders) removed during these clearances often found themselves as indentured labour on the sugar plantations of the West Indies!

The lead mines of S. Lanarkshire were also a notorious scene of injustice and to what really amounts to another form of slavery practised on our own doorstep. These Lanarkshire mines were owned by rich Scottish families who kept their workers impoverished and in distress by insisting that the basic necessities of life were to be purchased from 'the company store'. No Welfare State existed, and miners who were injured (even killed) left debts that were simply passed on to their impoverished wives and children.

It is only within recent times that public access to the lavish Bute House has revealed that the privileged life of its owners was built on the toil of the coal-miners of South Wales. The Marquis of Bute had personal control over the

social development of this beautiful Scottish island.

Does something happen to a human being when they assume the 'Title of Privilege'? The evidence, (borne out by both the French and Russian revolutions) seems to suggest that it does.

The question today's Quakers must ask themselves is of course, "Are human beings ordained by their Creator to 'lord it' over their fellow men?" The early Friends had a sense that this was not the case and so they declined not to 'doff the cap to any man'. 'The Rich Man in his Castle, the Poor man at His Gate' ? Did the Lord God *really* deem that such social injustices become 'the order of the day' ? Certainly not according to my own understanding of the poems, letters, and songs that Quakers have traditionally come to identify as Holy writ. There is of course another word in the English language that is sometimes used to disguise slavery, and that word is *exploitation*. In exploitation the victim is kept in a permanent state of poverty and deprivation. The fact is that the God being served did not create money, it was *man himself who* created money. Who's head is on the coin? asks the Christ-figure. We have polluted the oceans with plastic, and it seems to me that the same thing now appears to be happening at our supermarket checkouts. "Self" service was never included in the manifesto of Yeshua of Nazareth.

[And God saith unto Cain, "Where is thy brother Abel?" Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?"](#)

New Year's Resolutions

The AM group working on White Privilege in 2020 made several suggestions. Among them is this section:

3. Connect and support:

- Look in each other's eyes (physically or metaphysically) to see what is real.
- Look for facial expressions.
- Don't just refer each other to books and other resources. Start talking to each other to accomplish something. Do something together.
- Twinning with meetings across the world.
- Connect with Europe – Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA).
- Support people in links and to be able to do positive things.
- Work harder on outreach.
- Increase Interfaith work. It is a bridge to diversity.
- Increase dialogue.
- Meet others, e.g. help asylum seekers and refugees.
- Invite friends with lived experience to join groups such as Glasgow Quakers Sanctuary group.
- Work together with others – what 'ally-ship' can we cultivate?
- Embrace and enjoy other cultures, welcome in other cultures, keep being curious.
- To be radical we need to be surrounded by diversity.

Book Review: *Sacred Nature* by Karen Armstrong

Richard Gault presents a book which urges us to radically rethink our relationship with the natural world. This review is courtesy of Beshara Trust .

These are unprecedented times. We are beset by environmental and climate crises we ourselves have provoked. What can be done? Thinkers such as Iain McGilchrist, whose book *The Matter with Things* [1] I reviewed in *Beshara Magazine* in early 2022, have alerted us to the need to reassess the way in which we understand the world from the point of view of neuroscience and metaphysics. With this book aimed at a general audience, subtitled *How We Can Recover Our Bond with the Natural World*, Karen Armstrong offers another approach. Her plea is for us to properly relate to nature. To summarise (and necessarily over-simplify), the position Armstrong takes is that relationship trumps knowledge.

Sacred Nature complements *The Matter with Things* in a number of ways. For instance, the idea of relationship is also central to McGilchrist's argument, but whilst his focus is on establishing its ontological primacy, Armstrong's is more practical. She deals with 'know how' rather than 'know that'. McGilchrist concludes his book with the advice that we should strive for what he terms 'closeness' in three areas: closeness to one another, closeness to nature, and closeness to Reality/God. Armstrong argues that closeness to nature is the most vital of the three, elaborating what it involves whilst at the same showing how it is bound up with a deepening connection with others and God, since nature is what binds us with God.

So how are we to know what our relationship with nature should be? According to Armstrong, we can learn from our own poets and the wisdoms that the sages and religions of the world have long been transmitting to us. These wisdoms are conveyed in myths. That we have been too long deaf to their teachings is explained by the triumph of rationality over *mythos* in western civilisation, she explains in her opening chapter. So she concludes: 'Our first task is to appreciate the value of myth and understand how myths work.' (p. 28)

Armstrong is perhaps uniquely qualified to survey the myths of both the Occident and Orient as an acclaimed scholar of comparative religion. Her span is wide. She draws on her knowledge of the Abrahamic religions: of Chinese Confucianism and Taoism; of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Zen; of shamanism; and also the Romantic poets such as Coleridge and Wordsworth. The wisdoms which myths transmit stretch back from the beginnings of the so-called Axial Age (900–200 BCE) to the present. However, wide as her scope is, she has little to say about the practices of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and Australia, though I suspect they would only strengthen her argument.

The contention of the book is that while beliefs and religions assume many forms, when it comes to their approach to nature there is a remarkable degree of common ground. This truth is not so much to be expressed as facts but as feelings. Science strives for objectivity, but Armstrong detects in the world's myths an emphasis on emotions, on aesthetics, and on empathy. Proper relationship with nature, she maintains, is a matter of the heart rather than the head.

In essence, she understands the ancients to be telling us to approach nature as sacred, as holy. This is a near-universal wisdom, but she feels that an important exception is to be found within Judaism and Christianity. 'The Hebrew Bible', she notes, 'does not focus on the sanctity of nature.' (p. 11) In setting God apart as another (if very special) Being – a 'distant reality' (p. 65) rather than 'Being Itself' (sic) – Christendom came to believe that 'Nature was no longer a theophany, a revelation of the divine; it was a commodity that must be exploited.' (p. 14)

However, she admits that even within these traditions there were, and there remain, important exceptions to the desacralisation of nature – for instance in the approach of the Kabbalists within Judaism, and saints such as St Francis of Assisi within Christianity (see pp. 53–5 & p. 129). Nevertheless, the general approach of these religions contrasts significantly with the attitude of the third of the Abrahamic faiths, Islam. Nature in Islam 'is a divine revelation equal to the Qur'an' (p. 118):

Indeed, nature itself is the supreme example of Islam, the wholehearted 'surrender' to the divine that lies at the heart of Muslim spirituality: 'Do you not realise that everything in the heavens and earth submits to God: the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees and the animals' (Qur'an 22:18). All creatures praise God simply by existing and doing what is ordained for them by nature. (p. 120)

For the mystical philosopher Ibn al-'Arabi, Armstrong notes, 'the natural world is the "breath of the Merciful" and everything in it is an expression of the divine sigh.' (p. 86) Islam, she concludes, teaches that 'Human beings should create societies that reflect the balance that enables the natural world to function harmoniously by acting towards one another with justice and compassion.' (p. 123)

Practical Suggestions

However, Armstrong's main purpose is not primarily the interpretation of the world's great teachers and spiritual traditions: rather, she intends this book to be a guide to saving ourselves. Each chapter concludes with practical actions that the teachings she surveys suggest. She begins by urging us to re-evaluate our understanding of myth, maintaining that myth should not be judged as reporting facts but as offering guidance to right action (see pp. 27–9).

Then she exhorts us to make time each day to sit quietly and ‘register the sights and sounds of nature’ (p. 59) and so come to see ‘... the divine as an ... inner presence that flows through all things.’ Hence, we can

learn how to revere nature in a positive, life-affirming sense. [...] Above all, perhaps, we should embrace the neo-Confucians’ vision of humanity forming ‘one body with all things’. Awe at the natural world and unity between humanity and nature [...] a vision based on empathy rather than power, partition and blame. (p. 154)

Her advice drawn from Hinduism is that: ‘Every day we should try to honour in our minds the holiness of every single natural object and person that we encounter.’ (p. 100) She detects similar wisdom given by Confucian sages who taught that: ‘We simply need to recognise the sacrality of everything around us and observe how the myriad things tirelessly support one another.’ (p. 145) Thus ‘instead of looking up to a distant heaven or deity to give his life meaning, the sage marvels at ordinary [...] things on earth – a spoonful of water or a handful of soil.’ (p. 146) Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* echoes this sentiment: ‘He prayeth best, who loveth best All things both great and small; For the dear God who loveth us He made and loveth all.’ (quoted, p. 198). Interpreting the wisdom found in Jainism, she concludes that we should ‘[...] endeavour to reflect upon our behaviour – treading with caution, laying down objects with care, noting if we spoil or discard things.’ (p. 166)

Practising awareness like this goes further than contemporary mindfulness since we are asked to give meaning and value to what we experience. There is also a response required: we should daily ‘express our gratitude to nature’ (p. 136, and see Chapter 7 as a whole). A recent piece in Beshara Magazine about the Ainu people of Japan demonstrates just how important this has always been within the indigenous cultures

All this should be complemented by a deepening understanding of ourselves. The ideal is to achieve selflessness, ‘kenosis, an emptying of the self’ (p. 101). She notes that ‘From a very early period, *kenosis* [a Greek term] was regarded as crucial not only to people’s spiritual life but to the entire world order.’ (p. 101). Armstrong finds *kenosis* praised in Taoism: ‘Is it not because the sage possesses no ego that he can thus establish his Self?’ she quotes from the Tao te Ching. (p. 104) It is also there in the Buddhist practice of *anatta*, ‘live as if the self did not exist’; (p. 104 & 105); in Paul’s teaching as in his Letter to the Philippians: ‘Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first, but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead’ (2:2–4, quoted p. 107), and perhaps most explicitly in Islam where she points out that the name itself means ‘surrender’: “this is first and foremost a surrender of the ego; a Muslim is a man or woman who has made this existential relinquishment of self.” (p. 111)

Above all, Armstrong urges us towards an attitude of humility. 'Every day,' she recommends, 'for just a few moments we should consider three things: how little we know; how frequently we fail in kindness to other beings; and how limited are our desires and yearnings, which so often begin and end in our self.' (p. 115)



Holy Well, Coole Upper Two Churches, North Cork. Image: [The Speckled Bird \[/\]](#) via Wikimedia Commons

A Call to Action

Paradoxes are a feature of wisdom, as McGilchrist also points out. So after urging us to give up our sense of self, Armstrong ends by emphasising our individual importance: 'We cannot simply leave the fate of the world in the hands of our political leaders; every single one of us has responsibility' (p. 175) she believes. She cites the Confucian text [The Great Learning \[/\]](#):

From the Son of Heaven to ordinary people, all, without exception should regard cultivating the person as the root. It can never happen that the root is disordered and the branches are ordered. (p. 175)

Armstrong's book is a heartfelt call to action, for a revolution in our way of relating to nature. She has done a marvellous service in distilling the wisdoms of the ages. Surely it would be profoundly unwise not to attend to wisdoms shared so widely. Perhaps lying at the heart of all these wisdoms is the ancient wisdom 'Know yourself'. But what does this mean? Armstrong is telling us that we need to attend not so much to *what* we are as to *how* we are – or at least, how we should be. We should be relating to nature with humility, empathy, compassion, awe and gratitude. When we do so we can expect a reciprocal response – reciprocity being an intrinsic part of any relationship – with nature in turn nurturing us, not subjecting us to plagues, famines, and a climate crisis. More directly and personally perhaps, anyone who practices what Armstrong recommends can expect to deepen their understanding of themselves and of God, since nature is a binding link with the sacred.

***Sacred Nature* was published by Bodley Head in June 2022.**

**Be Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my Light.**

A Celtic Guide to Listening to our Souls and Saving the Earth
By John Philip Newell **Maureen Anderson**

The first record is of a monk, Pelagius who travelled from Wales to Rome around 400AD teaching that all human beings have the dignity of being divine. *His teachings were banned in mainstream Christianity at various synods starting in AD416 when he was found guilty of heresy.*

Later, a wondering monk named John Scotus Eriugena taught the sacred flow which runs through all things is that of God.

The last chapter looks at the poetry of a modern poet, Kenneth White whose poems honour the sacredness of the earth and the need we have deep within us to reconnect with it.

In the Celtic world the imagination is a faculty of knowing. It is a way of remembering what we have forgotten, that spirit and matter are interwoven and that time and eternity are intermingled. The imagination is also a bridge into the future, forever opening us to ways of seeing and living that we have not yet experienced. To be made of God is to be made of sacred imaginations. It is to have the capacity to dream our way into new beginnings, in our lives and in our world. Alexander John Scott helps awaken us to these possibilities.

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Some recommended Children's Books from Eileen Redden at the Forum

The Good for Nothing Tree

By Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustrated by Annie Bowler

The Good for Nothing Tree asks us to consider lessons the parable of the fig tree (Luke 13:6-9) might hold for us today. In their telling, Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso turn the landowner into an impatient gardener, and turn the caretaker into a diverse group of five children who have come to love the little tree.

“As in a good parable, there are many potential lessons for us,” says Ken Jacobsen. “At the book’s end, they offer a number of queries with which grown-ups might explore these lessons with the young listeners.”

On Aspects of Worship

Listen

By Gabi Snyder, illustrated by Stephanie Graegin

In an overstimulating world, children sometimes lose sight of the difference between hearing and listening. In this story, a young girl walks out of her home and is barraged by a cacophony of sounds: engines revving, cars beeping, trucks backing up, dogs barking. The narrator then guides the reader through not just hearing the sounds together, but intently listening to each individual sound.

“Warmly illustrated in soothing shades of blue, this story is an exercise in mindfulness, guiding children to slow down and truly listen to what’s around them,” said Julia Copeland.

A Stone Sat Still

By Brendan Wenzel

The centerpiece of this lovely book is a stone, set at the edge of an ocean. Page by page, various animals experience the stone in different ways. To the chipmunk, the stone appears dark; to the owl, it is bright; to the moose, it seems a pebble; to the tick, it is a hill.

Alison James says, “First-day students could use this book as a thread into meditation, holding stones in their hands and imagining all the different experiences the stone has had in its million-year life.”

Buy from QuakerBooks

And note Helen Minnis’ book of her Swarthmoor lecture is now out.

Vandana Shiva

Margaret Roy

I heard of this woman on BBC Woman's Hour (5/1/2023) and was totally blown away. The resume below is taken from her website *Navanya International*. She has written so many books and turned to Earth, Soil, Women and Agriculture in her later years after a lifetime in science, especially quantum physics.

I have been much inspired working with African women theologians who have a different view of democracy and challenge our patriarchal economic system. Re democracy I eventually realised that to see God in everyone and to empower individual expression may not be a good idea if the individual's leadings remain untested, if they are so divorced from the community. *Ubuntu* gives the individual value but he/she also belongs and is contained - two core issues that come up again and again in individual psychotherapy and cause so much pain in our western culture when they are missing.

One aspect of Vandana's interview that made me prick up my ears was that India got rid of big corporations at Independence so their recent intrusion was seen as colonialism. These women are turning the world (my world anyway) upside down with refreshing new and creative vision.

Vandana Shiva, a world-renowned environmental thinker, activist, feminist, philosopher of science, writer and science policy advocat, is the founder of Navdanya Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (India) and President of Navdanya International. Trained as a Physicist at the University of Punjab, she completed her Ph.D. on the 'Hidden Variables and Non-locality in Quantum Theory' from the University of Western Ontario, Canada. She later shifted to inter-disciplinary research in science, technology and environmental policy, which she carried out at the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, India. In 1982 she founded the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE), an independent research institute that addresses the most significant problems of ecology of our times, and two years later, Navdanya ('nine seeds') the movement in defense of biodiversity and small farmers. In 2011 she founded Navdanya International in Italy and is Chairman of the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, co-founded with the then President of the Region of Tuscany. Recipient of many awards, including in 1993 the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize', and named among the top five "Most Important People in Asia" by AsiaWeek in 2001. Shes is a prolific writer and author of numerous books and serves on the board of the International Forum on Globalization, and member of the executive committee of the World Future Council.

Some of her books:

Making Peace with the Earth; Oneness vs the 1%; Biopiracy: the plunder of Nature and Knowledge; Stolen Harvest: the hijacking of global food supply (Culture of the Land); Soil not oil: Climate change, peak oil and food insecurity; Seed Sovereignty, Food Security: women in the vanguard of the fight against Gmos and corporate agriculture.

You'll hear more of her when we review one of her books. Volunteers???

Congenies in France

Ed and Carina Tyler went on a cycling holiday to France at the beginning of November. They stayed near Congenies near Nimes in the Gard Department, partly because they wanted to visit the only dedicated Quaker Meeting House in France that is still in use. They attended Sunday Meeting for Worship a few days after the Friends celebrated their House's bi-centennial.



Congenies is situated in a fertile region near the Vidourle river. More than two hundred years ago the area had become attractive to non-conformist sects. The story of how one of these became converted to Quakerism seems belong more to fiction than reality, involving the American War of Independence, piracy and a notice in a Paris newspaper. The upshot was that a Meeting House was built in the small agricultural town of Congenies, about 15 miles from Nimes.

They are part of an Area Meeting covering a very large area (a big chunk of southern France) with only 50 or so Members and Attenders. Imagine WSAM without Glasgow and Dunblane!

The photo is of Carina and other Friends after the Meeting. We are standing under an olive tree which is to be harvested at the beginning of December.

A glass of water

"Please can I have a glass of water"

"Gosh, are you thirsty? I know what's it's like to be thirsty; you have my sympathy.

I remember a time when I was stuck in a traffic jam on a hot day. A friend had told me about a bargain in a shop that I should buy before they ran out. But when I got there it was too late and they had sold out, and would you believe it, on the way home I got caught in a traffic jam; I was stuck for ages. It was so hot in the car but I didn't want to open the windows because of the fumes from other cars~ it's so irresponsible for other drivers leaving their engine running. People should care for the environment.

I could have done anything for a glass of water, so I know exactly how you feel.

Oh, that's reminded me about my friend, I promised I'll meet her, so I had better dash. Lovely to have spoken to you, and I'll remember about your glass of water the next time we meet.

Bye" **Submitted by Mike Shilson, Mull & Iona**

News from Local Meetings

Glasgow Quaker Meeting House a view from Bill Bingham

Thirty-eight Elmbank Cres, Glasgow, was built during the period between 1850 and 1860. During that time 2 million people died in Ireland when the potato harvest failed. Britain at that time was the richest country in the world, and this tragedy should never have been allowed to happen. Quakers in Ireland did what they could to help their fellow men during the period of this unwarranted catastrophe.

As the building neared completion, the American Civil War began, and it eventually cost the lives of 700,000 men over the issue of whether one man had the right to own another man and to deprive him of his human rights. Quakers have always been at the cutting edge of the struggle against slavery.

General Robert E. Lee, who owned 200 slaves, said, "The greatest mistake I ever made was in choosing a military career." Lee ended his days as a school teacher.

Lee's estate at Arlington is now a military cemetery where the 60,000 young Americans, average age 19 who died in an illegal war in Viet Nam, are commemorated. Robert McNamara, who was Secretary of Defence during the conflict, later went to speak to the Vietnamese leaders after the war. They told him,

"We were fighting for our freedom, we have been fighting the Chinese for a thousand years." McNamara has since written a book titled "The Fog of War."

In 2003 President George W. Bush claimed that God told him to attack Iraq. No God that I am aware of would tell any American President to attack anyone. It seems to me that if the Christ teaches us to love our enemies, then dropping bombs on innocent people is simply not on his manifesto. Quakers have consistently seen warfare as a complete violation of the Laws of God, and are 'convinced' about the validity of the central message of the New Testament. The Romans who drove the violating nails into the flesh of Yeshua failed realise that with every blow of the hammer they were beginning a process that would ultimately destroy the brutal Empire of which they and their Caesars were a part.

Glasgow Meeting House was, for a time, occupied by the Royal Artillery Club until it was purchased in 1991 by the peace-promoting Quakers of 'No Mean City'

NEW BABIES

A warm welcome to two new babies in Glasgow Meeting.

Congratulations to Ed Bruce and Oktavia Schreiner on the birth of their daughter, Orla, in early October .

And to Kath Allan, Tom Morrison and Rowan: a new brother Benjamin born 22 Nov 2022.

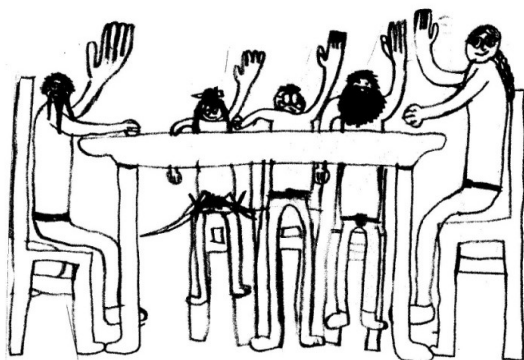
Castle Douglas Creative listening

Castle Douglas Friends had a shared lunch recently followed by a 'Creative Listening' session. It was the first time we had used the kitchen in our new premises for hot food and it worked well.

After lunch we considered prepared questions on how we receive one another's ministry during and after Meeting for Worship.

We listened deeply to one another as thoughts and feelings were shared. We also considered how we respond to differing experiences and outlooks among us and how we can best provide a

welcoming space for anyone who might want to join us on our spiritual journey.



DUMFRIES INTERFAITH WEEK EVENT 2022

Our Interfaith Week Event in Dumfries was scheduled for Sunday afternoon, 13 November, the first day of IF Week. Two days earlier we were catering for 20, and wondering if we would achieve even that. Late on Saturday evening I received an email 'warning' that there might be 60+, and on the day itself, if we include the children, voluntary helpers, and Ukrainian families from all over the region, no less than 132 people came through the doors! Among them, we were especially delighted to welcome the IF Group's inspirational 'founder', Venus Carew.

The IF Group can take little credit for this crowd, most of whom were invited by the Dumfries & Galloway Multicultural Association, whose premises we used. Dumfries IF Group itself is very small, so we work closely with the DGMA, who are at the forefront of local work with refugees and others of different faith traditions. And it was pleasing to see on display a banner made, several years ago, by the DGMA Women's Group, with help from the IF Group.

Given that almost every faith/belief tradition celebrates festivals, our take on

Storytelling, the theme of the Week, was to invite speakers to tell the stories behind their own faith's Festivals.

We listened first to a Baha'i speaker, and gathered that that faith has more festivals than most others! He spoke of Naw Ruz (New Year) and Ridvan, (his favourite) both of which involve a period of fasting followed by gatherings of friends and families enjoying delicious food.

Our speaker from the Jewish tradition shared with us the Passovers of his youth. These, whilst enjoyable, had failed to impress and engage him then. Later on, however, they began to make sense to him, and eventually instilled in him the principles by which he lives his adult life: the awareness of, responsibility for, and connection to all others, of whatever background, throughout the world.

For the first time, at an IF Week event in Dumfries, we welcomed a Muslim speaker, who emphasised to us that Islam is a religion of Peace, one which respects other faiths, and believes in the Oneness of God. We heard relevant verses from the Qur'an, read in Arabic, an unexpected treat. And he described the festival of Eid al Fitr, which marks the end of fasting in Ramadan, the seventh month of the Muslim calendar.

Unexpectedly, we heard from three different Christian denominations. The Roman Catholic Sister, whom we had invited, initially fell foul of public transport. So, in the meantime, one of the organisers, a Church of Scotland Elder, briefly outlined the background to the traditional British Christmas, with which many of our audience would be familiar. Then, to our delight, an interpreter amongst the Ukrainian guests, described the Orthodox Christmas of her homeland, celebrated in early January, and helpfully spoke both in Ukrainian and English.

Eventually, the RC Sister did arrive, and told us about the Easter festival in the RC Church, where the Stations of the Cross, commemorated on Good Friday, is so prominent. Traditionally, the period of Lent, leading up to Easter, was a time of fasting, perhaps less so among the laity today, but nevertheless, this pattern does find echoes in both the Baha'i and Muslim traditions.

This account of what our speakers had to say is, of course, essential to the report, but it doesn't actually begin to describe the atmosphere in which this event took place, the fun and enjoyment that was had, the uplifting of the spirit which so many felt.

It was splendidly chaotic - the unexpected numbers of people, especially the children, whose crèche was within the same general 'room' area! Folk continuing to arrive, long after the intended start time; speakers delayed; speakers unexpected; some minor sound system and temperature issues But I think the majority of people were just so happy to be among such a large and varied crowd, meeting old friends and making new contacts, together savouring lovely and unusual food, much of it provided at very short notice by

a local Syrian café owner, plus some delicious Ukrainian sweet contributions. Learning together too, from the stories told, how similar, in many ways, are the festivals of the different faiths represented.

In a way, the gathering was a festival in itself. Neil McGregor, in his book 'Living with the Gods', describes festivals as "combining reverence for the divine with throwing a great party, not just living with the Gods, but celebrating with them", and I think we certainly did that

Wigtown Meeting

Friends will have heard by now that we are selling our Meeting House in Wigtown. We have struggled with this decision for some time but recognise that the time has come to relinquish the responsibility. Our meeting never fully recovered from the Covid lockdowns, losing some members in the process, and the regular letting income we had has dried up. With fewer numbers and ageing membership it has become increasingly difficult to give the building the loving care which it deserves.

We hope it will be sold to people who will use it and enjoy it as much as we have done. We are confident that by the time we must leave an alternative meeting place will have been found, and with the removal of the responsibility will come new strength.

OUR HEALING MINISTRY AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME

George Fox was strong in promoting a healing ministry.

And Jesus' healing ministry fills the pages of the Gospels

Healing ministry is bypassed a little when prayer is seen as worship of a deity.

While we struggle with our relationship with God, how can we accommodate spiritual healing which seems so connected? Or, that word 'spiritual' gives rise to all sorts of images that do not fit in with our modern scientifically minded modern culture. Weird!

Spiritually the process starts with surrender. Yes, it could be surrender of the Ego, or little Self, but it is not a loss. Moving from Head, thinking mind, to Heart opens new vistas on consciousness that are based on connection, not defining and separation. Unity is the key, Oneness. Of course, this is what we do in Meeting for Worship which is why the healing ministry is such a core and essential part of our stillness.

Holding in the Light is a simple form of healing - to hold the person/situation in the heart and to let the love flow in that direction. No judgement or interpretation. This is a powerful healing prayer, probably the most powerful.

In these difficult times open your heart to those around, getting too many to mention but you know who they are.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

14 th January	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm Venue to be confirmed
6 th March	Area Meeting	by Zoom (7-9 pm).
15 th April	Area Meeting	Dumfries/Castle Douglas 11.30am – 4pm
5 th June	Area Meeting	by Zoom (7 – 9pm)
19 th August	Area Meeting	Tarbert/Lochgilphead 11.30am – 4pm
7 th October	Area Meeting	Dunblane/Lanark 11.30am – 4pm
11 th March	GENERAL MEETING	10.30 am Glasgow

3rd March Womens World Day of Prayer This year the focus will be Palestine.

HELP NEEDED

Distribution of West Scotland Quaker News

After many years Mary Latham has stopped sending out the printed copy of the Area Newsletter. The job involves printing out about 50 labels, sticking them on envelopes, stuffing in the newsletter and taking the packages to the post office. The West Scotland Quaker News comes out about four times a year so the task isn't onerous. Anyone brave enough to take her place?

Contact Margaret Roy <margaret.roy@btinternet.com> or Mary Latham <m.latham@ntlworld.com> if you would like more information or think you could help.

And many many thanks to Mary for her steadfast labour of sending out the hard copies over many years.

West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions or the next issue of WSN is 15th February 2023. And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not sent in articles over 1000 words should be send in Word format only to the editor Margaret Roy.