

THE GAZETTE

Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends JUNE 2026



“Our vision is of a unity of faith and works. We recognize that some come to works only after gaining faith, and some come to faith through working. Ideally, we reach inward to the Spirit that speaks to us and guides us, and outward to the world which needs us and which we need if we are not to drift into empty piety or self-glorification.”

Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1985, p. 176.

“To some God and Jesus may appeal in a way other than to us; some may come to God and to love, without a conscious attachment to Jesus. Both Nature and good men besides Jesus may lead us to God. They who seek God with all their hearts must, however, someday on their way meet Jesus.”

Quoted in Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1976, p. 1.

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Upcoming Events

New England Yearly Meeting



366th Annual Sessions – From **July 31** through **August 4**, 2026 at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA. This year's theme, *Spring Forth O Well, and Make Us Whole* (Numbers 21:17), speaks to the external challenges of racism, rising authoritarianism, community divisions, international conflict, and environmental crises that are on the hearts of New England Friends. The plenary speaker will be C. Wess Daniels, William R. Rogers Director of Friends Center and Quaker Studies at Guilford College. The Bible Half Hour talks will be presented by Adria (Gulizia) DiCapua, member of New York Yearly Meeting, the Friends of Jesus Fellowship, and the Board of Advisors of Earlham School of Religion. Registration is open. Learn more at <https://neym.org/2026-sessions-registration>.

Monthly **check-in for immigration justice work** among friends. **June 23** and **July 28**, 7:00 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://neym.org/events-calendar/2026/03/monthly-check-immigration-justice-work-among-friends>.

Sandwich Quarterly Meeting

Quarterly Meeting for Business – Saturday, **July 25** at Smith Neck. Meeting starts at 10:00 (fellowship starts at 9:30).

New Bedford – **Work party** after worship followed by lunch, every **second Sunday**, with next gatherings on **June 14** and **July 12**.

New Bedford -- **Vigils for Love** -- weekly multifaith gatherings of silence, song, and prayer in support of all immigrants living in our community. For summer locations and times contact Gretchen Baker-Smith at hellogretchen@gmail.com.

Sandwich Monthly Meeting

No Monthly Meeting for Business on June 7 but Friends will gather in **Yarmouth** for a **special program**. Meeting for Worship begins at 10:00 a.m., followed by hospitality at 11:00 a.m. At noon, **Tracy Wilson** from the **Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project** will speak to us about the tribe's program to bring their ancestral language back to life. Tracy is the Executive Director of the Reclamation Project.

Dialogue Across Differences will next convene on Monday, **July 20** from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. This time we will meet at **East Sandwich** on 6 Quaker Road. We will continue to focus on *Cross-Meeting Collaboration: How Do We Come Together as a Monthly Meeting?* This will be a potluck. Please contact Tom Bigda-Peyton with any questions and to RSVP: 339- 223-0863 or Tom.bigda-peyton@chsli.org.

East Sandwich -- Keeping Centered in Troubled Times. Queries and worship sharing, Sundays **June 21** and **July 19** at East Sandwich Community House, 8:30 a.m.

West Falmouth – Lectio Divina – in-person gathering in the library corner **every Sunday** at 9:00 a.m. to consider selections from the Gospel of John.

West Falmouth – Friends Forum – award-winning author **Sarah Towle** will speak on immigration on **June 28**. See the next page of this issue to learn more and to register for this online event.

Erica H. Adams who established **Friends Forum** recently received \$10,000 in grants from the NEYM Legacy Gifts Committee and the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund/Sarah Swift Fund. Together, the grants will fund a two-year online Friends Forum program that will enable Erica to produce up to four, hour-long programs annually. Speakers will address topical issues that inform, inspire activism, and connect communities of Quakers and the public in dialogues across borders, beliefs, and disciplines. **Sarah Towle's June 28** presentation will be the first of these programs.

Pendle Hill– See <https://pendlehill.org/>.

An **online course** with **Kenneth Cukier**, journalist, AI expert and Quaker -- *Artificial Intelligence: Angel or Armageddon?* Tuesdays, **June 2, 9, 16, and 30** from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Cosponsored by Woodbrooke, an international Quaker learning and research organization based in Britain. Explore what artificial intelligence means for our faith, our practices, and our witness in the world. See <https://pendlehill.org/calendar/artificial-intelligence-angel-or-armageddon/2026-06-02/>.

American Friends Service Committee

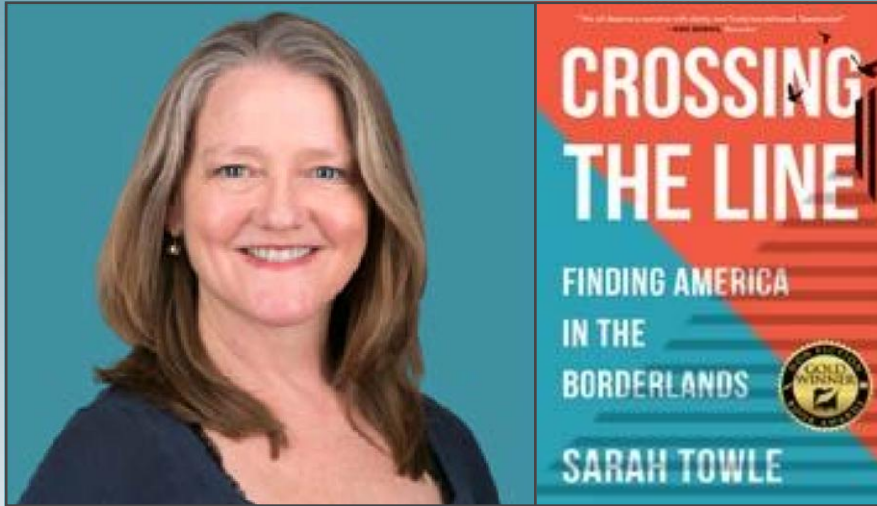
Every Thursday evening: *Meeting for Worship with Attention to Peace*, 7:30 p.m. Join Friends from across the globe as we bring our attention to witnessing injustice in our world and bolstering our solidarity with people facing oppression. Sign up to receive the weekly Zoom link at <https://afsc.org/events/meeting-worship-attention-peace>.

Third Tuesdays: *Protect, Resist and Build with AFSC*, a monthly webinar series that brings together AFSC constituents to learn about how to protect, resist, and build just peace, just migration, and just economies. Next sessions are **June 16** and **July 21** from at 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Learn more and register at <https://www.mobilize.us/afsc/event/746944/>.



Friends Forum

A Virtual Quaker Series



Sunday, June 28, 2026 · Sarah Towle
12:30–1:30 pm ET · Crossing the Line: Finding
Online event · America in the Borderlands

Register at bhf.org/friendsforum

Sarah Towle (www.sarahtowle.com) will speak about her book *Crossing the Line: Finding America in the Borderlands*. The newly-published 2nd edition includes a new Author Forward and Epilogue framed around the second Trump regime’s first 100 days and an updated call to action.

Sarah is an author, educator, researcher, human rights defender, nature lover, and choral soprano. She has taught English language literacy, cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution skills, and writing craft for three decades on four continents across the age span and in myriad contexts, including under the trees in refugee settings.

About the Book

2024 Nonfiction Authors Association Gold Medal Winner

2023 CIBA Nellie Bly Award First Place Winner for Journalistic Non-Fiction

2025 RFK Human Right Book Award Nominee

“Sarah Towle has obliterated today’s dead-end arguments about immigration and transformed them into riveting, human stories. We forget that ideas—good and bad—have always crossed our borderlines; only human beings need a piece of paper.

We all deserve a narrative with clarity, and Towle has delivered. Spectacular!”

—Ken Burns, filmmaker

News from some other Quaker organizations can be found at the following links:

Friends Committee on National Legislation: <https://fcnl.org/>.

Friends World Committee on Consultation: <https://www.fwccamericas.org>.

Friends General Conference: <https://www.fgcquaker.org>.

Quaker United Nations Organization: <https://quno.org/>.

Quaker Earthcare Witness: <https://quakerearthcare.org/>.

Quaker Spring – Summer 2026 Gathering will be held **June 28 -- July 1**. Friends can attend in person at Woolman Hill Retreat Center in Deerfield MA and online via Zoom. Learn more and register at <https://www.quakerspring.org/summer-2026-gathering>.

Friends General Conference -- The theme for the **2026 Gathering** is *A Window and a Door: A Prayer* -- **July 7** through **July 12** in Burlington, Vermont. Bible half hours will be led by Jen Newman of Beacon Hill Friends Meeting and the plenary address will be given by Bryan Stevenson, widely-acclaimed public interest lawyer and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative. Learn more at <https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcprograms/the-gathering/explore-the-gathering/>.

Erica H. Adams' painting *Ten Blocks* will be included in the upcoming juried exhibition "Resist Restrictions" at Moakley U.S. Courthouse in Boston. The exhibition features artists from the Massachusetts chapter of the National Association of Women Artists and runs from **June 30** through **September 29**, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays. Congratulations, Erica!



Ten Blocks © 2025 Erica H. Adams, Watercolor and Carbon on Hahnemüle Paper; 11.8 x 15.7 inches.

Interfaith Statement Calling for End to and Reform of Unjust Immigration Enforcement Practices and Laws – The statement, shown on the next page of this issue, has been endorsed by American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Pendle Hill, and a number of Friends meetings as well as numerous individuals from various religious organizations. The statement and all of its cosignatories can be found at <https://pendlehill.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Pendle-Hill-Statements-on-Beloved-Community-and-Unjust-Immigration-Laws>.

Our Call to End and Reform Unjust Immigration Enforcement Practices and Laws

As people of faith who believe that the Divine dwells within every human being, we bear witness to the devastating injustices perpetrated by current immigration enforcement practices in the United States. These oppressive actions and the legal regime that supports them profoundly betray our most sacred spiritual truth: that every person is inherently endowed with dignity and worth.

Under the guise of lawful authority, our government is damaging communities, separating children from their parents, tearing the sacred bonds of family, and leaving wounds that scar the soul and psyche. Current immigration enforcement unjustly singles out communities for oppressive and traumatic action based on race, creed and national origin, stripping away basic rights and privileges without due process. Vulnerable souls are thus condemned to persecution, oppression, poverty and even death within and beyond their home countries, sometimes using foreign prisons that practice torture.

Such cruel enforcement practices intentionally sow fear and spread terror in our communities—a violation of both human dignity and fundamental rights. Moreover, these actions blatantly breach our nation's binding commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the Refugee Convention and its Protocol, all of which affirm our sacred duty to protect human dignity and uphold the right to asylum.

Illuminated by the divine Inner Light, our consciences declare that human laws draw their legitimacy only from higher, divine truths. When human statutes defy these eternal truths—when they spread wanton suffering, division and despair—they cease to command obedience. This foundational principle resonates deeply with the core ideals upon which our nation was founded: Certain rights, inalienable and sacred, flow directly from our Creator and are entrusted forever to the people, beyond the whims of government to grant or withhold.

History reveals that spiritually awakened communities possess the clear moral vision to challenge, defy and transform unjust laws and customs. From the abolition of slavery to the dismantling of segregation and apartheid, from the advancement of universal suffrage to ongoing struggles for racial, gender, LGBTQ+, reproductive and religious freedoms, and freedom of expression, courageous souls have stood firm, willingly enduring unjust earthly penalties to uphold divine justice. Our faith communities embrace this legacy of bold advocacy, remaining steadfastly committed to nonviolent resistance and reform in the service of divine truth.

Compelled by our commitment to radical hospitality and by our sacred calling to "welcome the stranger" and to love our neighbors as ourselves, we urge all spiritually guided communities and individuals to rise courageously alongside immigrants facing persecution. We demand swift legal reform and an immediate cessation of oppressive, unjust enforcement. Together, let us build a genuine beloved community where the human and civil rights of immigrants are fully honored, protected and upheld. In this endeavor, we affirm the divine presence within each person and embrace the eternal spiritual truth upon which our faith—and our shared humanity—depend.

We invite you to join us and other organizations in sharing this statement widely and making it your own.



PENDLE HILL
A Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center

Update on Sandwich Friends Meetinghouse Museum Peg Fawcett

I am so pleased to report that the *Sandwich Friends Meetinghouse Museum* of Sandwich Monthly Meeting has been awarded \$1000.00 by the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). This 2026 Historic Preservation Grant offered by the NSDAR Joshua Gray-Jonathan Hatch Chapter will be used to install lighting over the exhibits. Many thanks to Friend Wendy Maggio of East Sandwich Meeting for alerting me to this opportunity and for providing me the application. I was invited to attend the NSDAR annual meeting along with two other awardees where we received our awards. We were treated to a fabulous luncheon and met many of the DAR members. By fall, we expect to complete the lighting project and I will return to give a report. I am deeply grateful for this funding.

Meanwhile, the museum is chugging along. We hope to have three exhibits installed this summer: the Marriage exhibit in July, and the Quaker Women and the Peace exhibits in August. We also plan to get work on the west room exhibits underway.

We hope to open the museum to the public in midsummer. Ideally, Friends from each of our three preparative meetings will be interested in serving as docents. We will need three docents for each shift: one upstairs, one downstairs, and one greeter. Tentatively we will be open Sunday afternoons and either Wednesdays or Thursdays for a 3–4-hour period, but open hours will depend on the best times for volunteer docents.

Because the museum will not be “finished” by mid-July, I do not plan to advertise beyond our websites until we are certain we have a good system in place and have worked out any bugs. I will keep the monthly meeting abreast of progress with the Sandwich Friends Meetinghouse Museum. Feel free to contact me with questions or comments (museum@sandwichquakers.com). Thank you!



Peg accepts Historic Preservation Grant of \$1000 from DAR Chapter Treasurer, Mary Anne Thompson, May 13.

Gardens are Growing!

Steve Gates

Despite the cool spring weather this year, Friendship Gardens of Cape Cod has had a great start. Our garden in West Falmouth delivered successive harvests of lettuce we planted March 19 to the Falmouth Service Center. Our biggest-ever lettuce harvest (photo right) occurred on May 21, when we were able to give away about 75 large bags of lettuce to clients and 25 bags to volunteers and staff. We've put in the summer plants and seeds, such as tomatoes and zucchini. Photos by Erica H. Adams except for final photo on next page by John P. Gates.



Our new garden at the Berry Patch Community Garden has really started to come together. First, we received a \$3073 grant from the Woods Hole Foundation to support this garden! Since the plots in this garden have not been used for vegetables in the past, we've spent a lot of time clearing the land, adding compost, and adding fences around each of the 8 gardens to keep out the rabbits. We have now planted almost all of our summer crops.



Sandwich Monthly Meeting State of Society Reports 2025

East Sandwich Preparative Meeting

Our spiritual community of Friends grew deeper and stronger in 2025. We found refuge in our faith and in each other as well as a safe place to bring our concerns for the great suffering of our world. Friends shared Quaker principles and leadings.

Throughout the year we met before worship to discuss spiritually-based topics, among them: *What is the Light?*, *The Meaning of Membership*, and *The Experience of Quaker Worship*. We gathered monthly for our *Keeping Centered in Troubling Times* discussions. The discussions and the related queries allowed us to discern our callings, voice our opinions, bring our despair, and offer each other hope during our current national turmoil.

While our diversity of thought and opinion is often a strength it can sometimes lead to hurt feelings. We continued to practice deeper listening without reacting, and tried to acknowledge our various strengths and weaknesses with respect. We adapted and supported each other in our changing roles. This dynamic was not easy, but it was good for us. We believe the Spirit moved in silence, in the small quiet voice. And we have seen the Spirit move fluidly through our concerns and caring for each other.

The year afforded us many opportunities to help integrate newcomers into the meeting. Our business meetings were focused and well-attended. New and old Friends participated. Following the leading of the Spirit, committees worked willingly and with dedication. Among the major projects undertaken were the upkeep and painting of the meetinghouse and repairs to the foundation of our 215-year-old building. Our museum continues to evolve and we anticipate its official opening in the summer of 2026. Our new, updated website connects us to each other and to the wider community. All of these activities reflect our commitment to each other and to our Quaker principles.

In addition to committee work, individual Friends were also involved in considerable social justice work, together addressing such issues as homelessness, environmental concerns, the inhumane treatment of immigrants, the needs of our Wampanoag neighbors, and local food insecurity.

One Friend summed up our year beautifully, expressing gratitude for the East Sandwich Meeting and “the tender Spirit that is gathering us together as a beloved community.”

Approved March 8, 2026, East Sandwich Meeting for Business

West Falmouth Friends' Meeting

The world in which we have lived during 2025 has had a profound effect on every one of us, leading friends old and new to seek quiet in the din, light in the darkness. During this tumultuous year, our Meeting has welcomed new seekers as well as long-time members and attenders, offering continuity, kindness, understanding and love, a rich counterbalance to things going on in the world. Spirit has held and guided us as we faced the realities of the day and sought ways to move forward in our quest for a better world.

West Falmouth's Sunday Quaker Meeting has been a sacred time in which we drew strength from the spirit that unites us. Each week we have gathered a solid group of regular members and attenders, both in the meetinghouse and on zoom. Zoom has become an indispensable way of reaching out and drawing in Friends from other meetings as well as our own members who are isolated by illness or who have moved away. After some years of discomfort with "hybrid" meeting, we have come to recognize that this dual format has deepened our sense of being one nurturing community, united in our search for spiritual grounding, truth, and meaning. Vocal ministry, speaking both in the meetinghouse and on zoom, has been a vital way of sharing with and sustaining each other. Messages offered in "after-thoughts" as we greet each other at the close of meeting have increasingly extended this time of thoughtful sharing. In truth, vocal ministry that draws the woes of the world around us into meeting for worship has caused some tension among us as we long for a calm sanctuary. As a community, we have sought to support the creative tension between the spiritual life of the Meeting and the wider world, respecting the diversity of leadings and longings among us.

Perhaps the most wonderful "growing edge" of our meeting in 2025 was that, among our new attenders, were three families with young children. They complete our meeting community with the joy, love, and energy they bring. Reviving our Children's Meeting to nurture them as young Friends has challenged and invigorated us. Their presence among us embodies our hope for the future.

Beyond the time allotted to meeting for worship, we have cherished the tenderness and caring that we found in other settings in our meeting community. Our connections to spirit and to each other have been strengthened by small groups for committee work and circle discussions. Joining for lunch following meeting has nourished our personal connections as well as our bodies. In the course of 2025, *lectio divina* on Sunday morning, the Friendship Garden group at their evening potlucks and gardening, the monthly gathering of our women's group, regular committee meetings and meeting for business, scheduled Sunday forums where members and attenders speak about matters of personal interest — all of these have increased our participation in the multifaceted dimensions of West Falmouth Meeting.

Yet another "growing edge" of our meeting has been an increase in communication and connections with our community beyond the meeting. While zoom bridges distances among us, weekly email notices provide information for joining not only our gatherings but also gatherings with the local community and the larger Quaker community. Over the last year our involvement with the Falmouth Interfaith Association, with the Falmouth Service Center, and with the Wampanoag have increased. The "Gazette", published by Sandwich Monthly Meeting, has continued to bring us personal news that unites our three Cape Cod meetings. Of even broader reach, the ongoing "Second Sunday Forum," orchestrated by Peace and Social Order in collaboration with the Tech Committee, reaches a widespread audience to hear voices from around the world as well as from our own meeting.

More than ever, this past year has taught us to treasure the nurturing power of our Quaker community. Let us hope that this community which sustains us will continue to give us the strength and courage to face the challenges of the day. We seek to live lives in which our actions, guided by spirit, not only contrast with the cacophony in the world but enable harmony.

Approved March 8, 2026, West Falmouth Meeting for Business

Yarmouth Preparative Meeting

During the past year, while our Meeting house restoration was moving along with the aid of our talented Restoration Committee and funding from a Town of Yarmouth Community Preservation Grant, our meeting itself has been growing in the Spirit. Vocal ministry has become more common and deeper, and at the end of worship, when those gathered are asked for after-thoughts, new wisdom often emerges from words spoken by some who may have felt a bit unsure about speaking out during worship. The queries that are read on the first First Day of each month often provide inspiration for vocal ministry. The camaraderie created by the words of the service and the welcoming silence as well is carried over into our hospitality when those returning to the Schoolhouse sit around the two big tables to sip coffee, enjoy food brought by many, and get to know each other better. Often the conversations are sparked by something spoken during meeting for worship, but may also, in this safe environment, reveal personal struggles, or worries about the world, or even discussion of simpler things like recommendations for books that have proved inspiring or different ways to cook traditional foods. Hospitality allows us to care for each other in important ways.

Focused discussion is at the heart of “Dialogue Across Differences,” led by a talented facilitator. These sessions occur several times a year and have attracted people from the other preparative meetings as well as members and attenders from Yarmouth. Here participants talk to each other with respect and often emerge with new ways to manage controversies in their own lives.

This year, too, a new member has offered thoughtful Bible study once a month after Meeting for Worship, to add to our spiritual growth.

For a small meeting, Yarmouth Friends have been able to undertake a wide range of service projects, supported both by our official budget and by contributions from individual Friends who feel a special call to donate to a particular project. These projects should indicate that fruit is appearing in the garden of our faith. Thus, for another year we have sent a donation each month to a Quaker meeting in Poland that supports Ukrainian refugees. Closer to home, we have made the first two donations of our three-year commitment to helping pay salaries for the teachers in the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project. We hope we can continue our financial support even after the initial three-year commitment has ended. We also have gathered donations each month for local food pantries and have purchased gifts and clothing for children in an “adopted” family at Christmas. We also took part in a project to provide backpacks and school supplies to local children in September and have held an annual pie sale whose proceeds are divided amongst the local food pantries. Our commitment to Quaker projects shows in our donations to New England Yearly Meeting, AFSC, and FCNL.

All in all, Yarmouth Friends has been growing into a welcoming, caring community in which the energy of the Spirit spills over into our individual and community service and manages to make a small harvest go a long way. Yarmouth Friends Preparative Meeting considers itself blessed, though we are constantly challenged, being so small in number, to find enough volunteers to take on the responsibilities of running the meeting.

In a world that often calls forth anxiety, depression, and fear, the silence of worship and the messages and support given by the worshippers offer a gift of calm that soothes the turmoil and promotes inner peace, allowing us to go forth into that world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Approved February 8, 2026, Yarmouth Meeting for Business

Memorial Minute

Kenneth Edward Agin (June 24, 1951 – January 21, 2026)



Kenneth Agin died on January 21, 2026 following a brief illness. He was 74. His numerous friends at East Sandwich Meeting knew him as a gentle presence, “a bit of a contrarian”, and someone who was able to talk freely about “both shadow and Light.”

The third of seven children, Ken grew up in Maynard, Massachusetts and had what he described as an extremely difficult childhood. He spent a good part of his adult life coming to terms with his experience, laboring to transform his pain into spiritual growth.

Ken attended Syracuse University in the 70s for a period, interrupting his studies to spend several years working on the West Coast. (He ultimately completed his Syracuse degree in Advertising at the age of 40.) Upon the death of his father in 1977, he returned to Massachusetts to help his beloved mother, Georgette. He shared a duplex with his sister, Phyllis, and became a surrogate father to her children, Nathan and Jamie.

Ken moved to West Barnstable in his early 50s. After attending East Sandwich Preparative Meeting regularly for several years, Ken joined the Religious Society of Friends and was accepted into membership on October 1, 2023. He quickly became an important part of East Sandwich Meeting where Friends found Ken’s conversation to be direct, often humorous, and of “penetrating honesty.” He was active on the Buildings & Grounds committee and, immediately prior to his illness, served briefly on Ministry & Counsel.

In addition to being a devoted Quaker, Ken also considered himself a Buddhist. In the words of one F/friend, he actively practiced “letting go of obstacles” and spoke frequently about the importance of “acceptance and forgiveness.”

Ken had broad creative interests evident in his writing, his painting (at one time he owned an art gallery) and his stone work (Ken was a stone mason and owned his own business).

During his later years Ken became a professional caregiver, opening his home to two elderly gentlemen with disabilities. He was devoted to the two and spoke of them often, referring to them as “my guys.”

Throughout his last months East Sandwich Friends kept in close touch with Ken, regularly reporting after visits and phone calls on his remarkably positive outlook even through treatment for lymphoma. One F/friend described Ken as “one very honest, direct human being coming into his own late in life, a life cut way too short.”



Readers Write

On Silence

Paul Denoncourt

“Silence is the language of God, all else is a poor translation.”

-- attributed to Rumi, 13th century Sufi poet and mystic

George Fox (1624-1691) taught that waiting on God is the central practice of faith. He emphasized that believers must quiet their busy minds and egos to hear the "Inner Light" — the presence of Christ within the soul. This receptive stillness forms the foundation of Quaker worship.

Fox was not the first to preach this concept. Christian silent contemplation traces its origins to the 3rd-century Desert Fathers in Egypt and the Middle East. Fleeing structured society, Saint Anthony (251-356) and other early ascetics sought unceasing communion with God. They practiced "Prayer of the Heart", a method of silencing the mind to enter a loving, imageless presence with the Divine. Later this practice was codified and introduced to Western monasticism. In the 14th century the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* championed a similar practice in his short book which, even today, is very readable. (I highly recommend it.) In the 1970s, Trappist monks at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts — most notably Thomas Keating—developed Centering Prayer. This accessible, silent method was created to revive ancient Christian contemplative roots for modern laypeople. Today this technique continues in the teachings and writings of Franciscan Father Richard Rohr.

The Protestant tradition does not have a strong history of contemplation beyond a few isolated individuals like George Fox; however, in the Orthodox tradition it is well documented. Silent contemplation is practiced in other Abrahamic religions as well. In Judaism, Hitbonenut—rooted in Kabbalah—focuses on quieting the mind and contemplating the divine presence in profound silence.

Islamic mysticism is known as Sufism (or Tasawwuf). It too seeks a direct, personal experience of The Divine through spiritual purification (emptying of the ego). Meditative practices include active, physical rituals (e.g., Whirling Dervishes), but also silent contemplation. Some contemplative practitioners, Rumi and Ibn Arabi, for example, have gifted the world beautiful poetry, artwork, and philosophies.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) saw silence not as an absence of sound, but as the truest form of divine connection and spiritual awakening. To him, the deepest truths cannot be put into words, as language is finite and thus distorts the truth about the infinite. He viewed silence as the source of all existence, the nothingness from which all things emerge. He warned that the constant chatter of the mind distracts the seeker. Only by going beyond the constant cacophony of thoughts can we access a deep, transcendent beauty. In his poem titled "In Silence", Rumi wrote about the Divine:

To see the Moon that cannot be seen
Turn your eyes inward
and look at yourself, in silence.

In this world and the next,
Don't talk about this and that;
Let him show you everything,
shining as one . . . in silence. *

Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) taught that only when the mind stops chattering can the heart truly turn to God and experience spiritual illumination (George Fox's Light).

How does all this apply to the practice of our Quaker worship? For one thing, a practice is called a practice because it needs to be practiced, often. Like developing any skill, one hour a week at the meeting house, for most of us, is hardly enough as the task is admittedly difficult. One tries to develop the ability to regularly still the mind of its memories (past); anxieties and goals (future); emotions and sensory input (present); even its sense of self. All that remains of you is pure Being waiting upon that "still, small voice" (Kings 19:11-13). More often the experience is an intuition or a knowing which rises to conscious awareness from deep within where "that of God" dwells. But despite one's efforts, it is not something you earn; it is truly a gift.

Be still, and know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

*From *Rumi: In the Arms of the Beloved*, Translated by Jonathan Starr, Penguin Books, 1997



For Ken Agin

dear Ken Agin,
your painting has found its home on a sandy wall downstairs
that was waiting for the sea, for the sky,
this scene you painted of old fishing boats beached at low tide,
with a quiet, dunegrass shore curving out of sight,
and a great serene blue sky far above the labors of the day
opening to a sure and sweet infinity,
this is your self-portrait, Ken,
a window of sea and sky to see our own infinity,
thank you, friend.

Ken Jacobsen, May 21, 2026



Ken Agin's painting. Photo: K. Jacobsen, May 27, 2026.

Clerks

Sandwich Monthly Meeting Fran Lightsom
Capecodquakers.org

East Sandwich Preparative Meeting Barbara Goodman
Sandwichquakers.org

West Falmouth Preparative Meeting
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Westfalmouthquakers.com

Yarmouth Preparative Meeting Pat Harvey
Yarmouthquakers.org

Contact information can be found in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting Directory.



Back cover: photo by Erica H. Adams, West Falmouth Friendship Garden, March 14, 2026.

The Gazette is a publication of
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The next *Gazette* will be the August 2026 issue. Deadline is Saturday, July 25. For archival copies of *The Gazette* go to <https://capecodquakers.org/previous-issues-of-the-gazette/>.

