

Plains Church News 29 July 2018

With Pastor Margaret Bell on vacation, Sally Martyn, Sparta, spoke about "Quakers: Their Religion and their Ways".

Many Quakers left the colonies at the time of the American Civil War (late 1700s) and Jonathan Doan eventually came to this area in 1812. He then recruited others from the Niagara area, Pennsylvania and New York so that a thriving Quaker community developed in the area in 1820s and was known as "The Corners". It became popular to name places after Greek cities. Aylmer was known as Troy, Corinth is to the East of Aylmer and "The Corners" was named Sparta.

The Quakers, also known as The Religious Society of Friends, built their first Meeting House near the Quaker Cemetery across the road from the Sparta Public School. The present Meeting House on Quaker Road is their 3<sup>rd</sup> and was built in 1865. Buildings are plain and functional with no added decoration.

Part of the Christian church, Quakers focus on certain beliefs. They profess no creed believing everyone has a direct connection with God. Hence they have no hierarchy of clergy leaders and no sacraments. Their worship services are quiet. They wait in silence. Waiting for worship. Waiting for someone to be moved by the Spirit of God to speak. Often they have no music other than some songs before or after the worship time. They refuse to swear oaths but will affirm they will tell the truth. Their word is their bond. They are opposed to slavery and assisted in the Underground railway system. When there are weddings or funerals they wait in silence. A couple to be married write their own vows which they speak aloud during the silence. Everyone present signs the marriage certificate but it must also be signed by the clerk of the meeting making it legal. Funerals similarly are quiet unless someone feels moved to share a memory or honor the departed. They uphold democracy, trial by jury, the equality of everyone before God and the importance of public education. In time of war, Quakers will serve in non-combat duties. Sally was thanked by Barbara Axford with the applause of the congregation.

Todd Noble was the presiding deacon and worship leader. Amy Dale, piano, provided the music for worship.

Guest speakers for the next 2 Sundays will be Kathy Noble, talking about the history of the Lord's Prayer. The Rev. Paulo Andrade, Associate Pastor of Hillside church community meeting on Adelaide St South, London in the YFC Youth Centre will speak on 12 August.

Malcolm