

**In Memoriam
Susan Chambers**

February 20, 1920 – November 18, 2014



Memorial Meeting

**Under the Care of
Concord Friends Meeting**

June 21, 2015

1:00 PM

Concord Quaker Meetinghouse

11 Oxbow Pond Rd

Canterbury, New Hampshire

Worship

Song: *Amazing Grace*

Welcome & Introduction to Worship

Centering Silence followed by

Reading of Memorial Minute

Unprogrammed Worship

Song: *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

Rise of Meeting



Let There Be Peace on Earth

Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father, sisters all are we.
Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now,
With every breath I take, let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

After we hear the memorial minute, we welcome those who feel moved by the Spirit to share a message; this message may be a prayer, a song, words of comfort, or lessons we have learned from Susan's life. Please stand & wait for the microphone so your message can be heard by all. And please allow a few minutes of silence between messages for reflection.

Memorial Minute for Susan Bottomley Chambers

With close to half a century of active participation in Quaker meetings by the time she moved to Concord, New Hampshire in the early 1990s, the Friends of Concord Meeting knew Susan Chambers as an elderss. In the late fifties, she and her family found their spiritual home at Hanover Friends Meeting. While there, Susan lost her husband to cancer. Within another five years she decided to move south where she became an active member of Charlottesville (VA) Friends Meeting for the coming twenty years. Upon returning to New Hampshire to be closer to her children, Susan settled in Concord and spent the final two decades of her life as a member of Concord Friends Meeting. During her years in Concord Susan suffered another loss. Her youngest child, William Jr. died at 40 in 1999.

Susan was our example of a woman fully engaged in her world, gracefully able to let go of one thing after another. As her own physical abilities diminished, Susan observed this process with a matter of fact acceptance. Moreover, when she spoke we heard about her experience of the present moment. Susan was not one to dwell in the past.

Susan was an artist with a keen eye to see beauty and create it for her and others. She had an inner eye that extended through the forms, lines, color, and shading to reach into abstract concepts and spiritual connections, giving them life on canvas and in sculpture.

There came a time, Susan described, when this ability with paint hit a dry period that she felt was a diminished capacity. Undeterred, she focused her creativity on sculpture. Susan's insights were quite remarkable as she conveyed heartfelt emotional connections to her pieces during a retrospective slide show at the Concord meetinghouse in 2011.

Susan was a regular attender of a women's worship group in Concord that made important friendships for her and in turn, she nourished the group. While she maintained her house in Concord, she invited the Meeting, and especially the children, to enjoy the garden as she did. After all, it was the source of much of her artistic inspiration. When it came time to let go of the garden and the house, she wanted Meeting members to take the plants. Now Queen Anne's

lace, iris, creeping myrtle, and forget-me-nots in various members' gardens remind us of Susan's love of the earth and her gentle, loving presence.

Susan accepted the Meeting's help graciously when it was needed. Her difficulty hearing inspired Concord Friends to acquire a listening system for the hearing impaired. When it could no longer meet her needs, we transcribed for her on a whiteboard. A cadre of drivers got her to and from Meeting. They and others learned to safely assist Susan with transfers from auto to wheelchair. In our culture, it is difficult to accept that our personal need could be a gift we offer another. Susan helped the Meeting with this lesson, allowing the experience of both compassion and humility to enter those around her.

She was truly inspiring as her dwindling capacities constricted her associations. There was nary a complaint or expression of pain, no bitterness expressed. She refused to close herself into her own world; Susan wanted to be out in the world with grit and determination, and grace. Though profoundly deaf she kept informed of world and community events, as she had throughout her life, and wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper expressing her deeply held convictions that peace is the way and that common sense and justice arising from common love should prevail. This she did kindly with no fear or thought of what others might think of her.

Even as she was confined to a wheelchair, could not hear, and could barely speak, she was emphatic in her desire to attend Meeting up until her last couple of months on this earth. During the time following worship when less formal personal sharing is encouraged, she would often convey a valuable thought for the day, usually closing with the words, "so, happy day!" When forming her thoughts and words became difficult, she gave Friends the gift of learning patience and tolerance, of learning to listen for the depth behind a message, to push our boundaries of expectations as to how one expresses oneself. There are two snapshots from last year that we hold dear in our vision. One is of Susan feeding baby Aurora. The other is Susan assisting in planting flowers at the meetinghouse during her last summer, a project she wanted so much to be a part of. Both fully express the cycle of life. "So, happy day."