



# Faringdon Quaker Meeting

NEWSLETTER 141 December 25 to January 26

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## Meeting Affairs

Shared Christmas Lunch  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December

Meeting for Worship for Business  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January

## Area Meeting for Church Affairs

Oxford Friends Meeting House  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 10:30am  
Refreshments will be provided. Please bring your own lunch.

The Spiritual Nurture Group is an all-age session led by Julia Dover she will be supporting musical Friends to hold a warm gentle space for dance (Morris!) and song for the young and young at heart, with the theme of Winter Glow.

Julia says, if anyone in Faringdon would like to help in the music/dance/song- they are welcome to contact me. We will be having an organisational zoom on 3 December to finalise the plans.

## News

- Kit Fotheringham to commence Triennium as Area Meeting Clerk in January 2026
- Jenny B asks can those who have not done so already, please hand in the form informing Jenny what information one wishes to receive from the correspondence clerk.

## Study Group

To be arranged suggestions to the Spiritual and Nurture group.

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## Recent gatherings

On Remembrance Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of November our meeting hosted a joint service with Churches Together in Faringdon.

Regional Meeting held at Swindon Friends Meeting House on the Saturday 18th October by

Ben Pink Dandelion, on 'The Heart of the Quaker Way' was well attended by Faringdon Quakers.

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## Readings for Meeting for Worship

December

- 7 Val
- 14 Simon
- 21 Paul
- 28 Gill and Trish

January

- 4 Janie
  - 11 Jenny
  - 18 Chris
  - 25 Geoff
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## Monthly Collections

### Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW)

#### [Donate to Religious Society of Friends Quaker Peace and Social Witness | Give as you Live Donate](#)

Janie writes,

We have chosen QPSW for our December donations this year, so I thought it might be helpful to outline the work done by this central department of our Society. I could soon see that it would be best for most of us to look on line, as they are currently active in eleven areas!

The website lists eleven of these:

Criminal Justice, Economic Justice, Environment and Sustainability, Non-violence, Peace education, Peace workers, Public issues, Peacebuilding in East Africa and South Asia, Support for QUNO Geneva, and Grants for higher education.

Just to expand in the Public Issues work, the committee makes submissions to the government and informs Friends on matters such as the renewal of nuclear weapons, climate change, young people in the military, asylum seekers and refugees.

So, they are very busy people. But the 14 November issue of the *Friend* gave a good example of their work with peace education. Nearly 100 young people from twenty schools in South Wales met at the culmination of their project to develop as peace schools. To quote from the article by Jane Harries of Bridgend Meeting: 'pupils have learned a range of skills, including being able to express feelings and respect those of others, active listening, empathy, cooperation and conflict resolution.' In this they were helped by Ben Harper and Izzy Cartwright of QPSW as well as the Welsh Senedd.

Teachers have found that peer mediation is effective, and the pupils enjoyed learning how to be a better mediator, with all the skills needed. Next steps will include dealing with polarised debates and the effects of social media.

### Signpost Homelessness charity in Cirencester

#### [Donate – Cirencester Signpost](#)

Signpost specialises in the delivery of services to anyone in and around Cirencester who does not have a place to call home.

Coming alongside individuals, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, we offer 1-1 support aimed at securing good outcomes that last for the long-term and get lives back on track.

We help to access services. We ask the right questions, we hear what matters and we anticipate needs before they arise. We give a voice to those who would otherwise go unheard.

Please speak with the Treasurer if you have suggestions for future collection recipients.

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## Flying Quakers, whatever next!

Chris writes

Flying Quakers I bought a moth trap earlier this year, basically an open-topped box with a UV light, and have been amazed and delighted by the number, variety and beauty of the moths in my garden. I've recorded over 120 different species and really enjoyed getting up early in the morning to see what's in the box. It's a bit like Christmas Day! There are several species called Quakers, so here are a couple of photos of our fluttery friends. Next year, I'm hoping to see what lives in our Meeting House Garden, too. Watch this space.

A Red-line Quaker, seen in October and a Yellow-line Quaker, flying earlier this month (November)



## Stillness amidst the protest

Emma writes,

A few times in my life I have experienced what I would view as spiritual moments. A few years ago, I attended an Extinction Rebellion protest in central London, where I joined a group of Quakers from around the country, along with 60,000 other people, to march from St James' Park to Parliament Square. I think like many people, there is a seed of doubt, unsure if you are doing the right thing to create change. However, something very special happened once we reached parliament which reassured me that I was making the right choice.

Following the march, the group of Friends arrived in the square and found a patch of grass, where they formed a large circle and then fell silent in shared worship. This caused people passing by to stop and fall silent with us, and spread like a ripple over the square, where the loud and vibrant crowds protesting also descended into silence. This felt incredibly powerful and unprecedented, everyone sharing this special moment of silent prayer for change, to open the hearts and minds of those in power to do the right thing. I found it very emotional and touching, the central heart of London, which is constantly bustling and noisy, had fallen silent to pray for change. It was a cloudy and overcast day, and as we prayed the clouds parted and sunshine illuminated the silent square, nothing could be heard except a bell chiming from a local church. After 10 or 15 min of silence a gentle murmur resumed in the square as our worship came to an end. I feel in my heart that something very special occurred that day.

Emma Markham

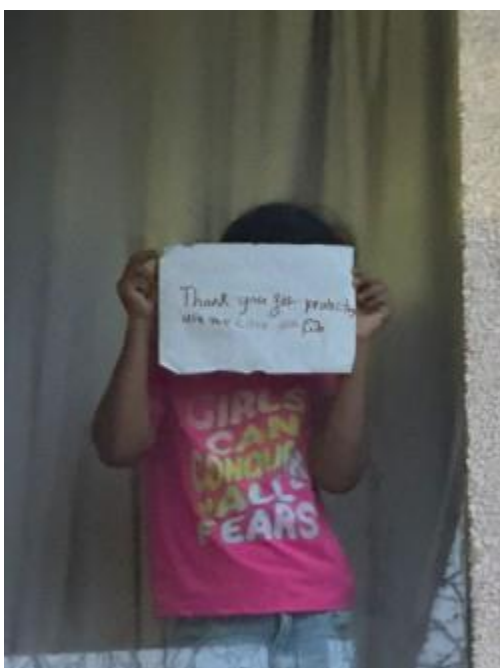
## Protecting Asylum Seekers

Sue Douglas writes, my son Hugh sent me two photos of a recent demonstration in Bristol, outside a hotel being used to house refugees. In anticipation of a hostile demonstration, he was part of a crowd which assembled to form a protective barrier.



The little girl says,

Thank you for protecting us, we love you



## ■ Report from Area Meeting Spiritual and Nurture Session

On Saturday, 8 November 2025, our area meeting held a spiritual and nurture session titled “Zen and Christianity”. Christopher Collingwood, a Canon at York Minster and a Zen teacher, led the discussion.

We started with a few minutes of silence. Chris then gave us a koan—a riddle that the rational mind cannot solve—about Bodhidharma having no beard. Bodhidharma, an Indian monk who brought Zen meditation to China in the 4th century, was famous for his beard. Chris said he would return to this riddle during his talk.

He told the story of Shakyamuni Buddha, from his royal birth, his disillusionment to his enlightenment after a night meditating under the Bodhi tree. In Zen, the Buddha is said to have declared, “When the morning star appeared, I and all beings on earth attained enlightenment.”

Chris described enlightenment as a state of emptiness—full and without boundaries—where everything is one. This sense of oneness, he said, is the foundation of our being.

He explained that this awareness leads to compassion, as it erases the divisions, we create between ourselves and others. When categories like “having a beard” disappear, the koan “Bodhidharma has no beard” makes sense.

Chris connected this idea to Christianity, quoting Paul’s words in Galatians 3:28: “There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, male and female, for all are one person in Christ Jesus.” He also pointed to the recurring theme of “I am” in the Bible: when Moses asks God who He is, God replies, “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:11–15), and Jesus says, “Before Abraham was even born, I am” (John 8:58).

Afterwards, we split into small groups to discuss what we had heard and then shared our thoughts with Chris. The responses were varied. Most of us noticed similarities between Zen meditation (zazen) and the Quaker practice of centring down to be open to the Source, both value silence over words. One Quaker described an enlightenment experience where their concept of God disappeared, leaving only the sense of the One–God. Others admitted they struggled to find stillness in meetings. Chris reminded us that there is no pressure to have “enlightenment experiences”—we are all on our own journeys.

I commented that both Zen and Quaker traditions put direct experience of the ultimate (God) above doctrine. I shared my own path: from Anglicanism, through psychoanalysis, to Zen practice, and then back to Christianity via the Quakers. I remembered a Zen practice day at Oxford Meeting House when someone asked, “Who are Quakers?” I replied, “Zen Christians!”

Simon Clark

