



# Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 552

April 2025



## Oxford Friends Meeting

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## Epistle from the Oxford Young Adult Friends Gathering, 3/2025

Oxford Young Adult Friends

*Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).*

To Friends everywhere, greetings in the Love that draws us together.

Oxford young adult Friends gathered from 15-16th 3rd Month (March) 2025 at Wallingford Meeting House to listen together to our Guide. We thank Wallingford Friends for their generosity and warm welcome. In times of worship, conversation, rest, and discernment, we felt new willingness to be led, to name and exercise our gifts, and to support each other to live faithfully. Our hearts were softened, our ears were opened to our Teacher, and our eyes were made more able to see God's loving hand in our lives and community.

As we met in worship, with the early spring sunshine streaming in through the windows of the meeting house, the sweet power of the Spirit helped us come into the slower rhythms of grace, where we can hear and rely on the Guide's voice.

We heard a call to the peace of abiding in the Vine, the source of our faithful work in the world. We

must allow ourselves to be pruned so that we can bear the fruit we are called to bear. We are called, not to lives of busyness, but to give over our own willing and running; resting in the Presence, the tasks that are truly ours come into view, and as God has God's way with us, we find that our lives are given new depth and new meaning.



*They went forth and gathered sticks, and kindled a fire, and left it burning*

Robert Fowler's description of the early Quakers

We reflected together on where we see the gifts and leadings of the Spirit in our lives and in each other's lives. We considered how we can encourage each other to sing, in our own ways, the song we hear God singing.

We were reminded of the value of friendships in which we can ask each other how God is working in our lives. We felt the need to nurture each other into nurturing each other. There are many gifts in our community, and by appreciating the gifts God is giving us, we can become more willing to live adventurously.

In a living meeting, we need elders: spiritual midwives with a sensitivity to the conditions of Friends and meetings. We need gospel ministers willing to bravely and vulnerably speak the words they are given. We need the gift of care that enables us to see more in others than they see in themselves.

These gifts are given for the good of our community, so it is our responsibility to help each other deepen in them. We feel a concern to invite Friends into this deepening work.

We are comforted to know there is a lasting Power that can join us to each other, whoever we are, however we find our way to Friends.

We heard a call to offer fellowship to those in our midst who may not yet know our ways, whom we may not yet know, but who are reached by the love we feel for each other. Can we challenge ourselves to open our doors and hearts more widely, allowing ourselves to be helped and changed by this? Are we listening for the new life the Living Teacher is calling us into?

We have enjoyed time with each other, recognized each other's gifts, and strengthened our bonds of friendship. We will carry from this place the love we have for each other and our meeting. We have felt close to many who were with us in spirit, aware that our Precious Friend rejoices in our unity.

As we have encountered the Presence in this meeting house, like many Friends before us, we have witnessed the thread of Living Fire that runs from the prophets to the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ at Pentecost to the early Friends who found Jesus living in their hearts.

That Fire has not gone out. It will not go out. We young adult Friends seek to know this Fire for ourselves, in our time. We have found it roaring here. This gives us hope for the future of our Religious Society. We have gathered around this Fire in worship, and we plan to leave it burning.



*Image from the garden of 43 by Caroline Worth*

## OxFAP – Oxford Quaker Meeting’s response to poverty in Oxford

Here are some excerpts from the last quarterly report from Citizens Advice, which gives a picture of the kinds of grants made by them, using the grant from OxFAP:

### The OxFAP group

Linnet Arthur  
Sheila Forbes  
Jill Green  
Ruth Kim  
Bridget Walker  
Caroline Worth  
Charles Worth

As you know, **OxFAP**’s grants go to 5 local charities to be distributed to those desperately in need. The charities are:

Asylum Welcome  
Homeless Oxfordshire  
Citizens Advice  
Elmore Community Service  
Aspire



Image: Barbara Speake Stage school | Crystal Hendrix Hirschorn. Creative Commons license.

- *We gave £200 to a young Afghan refugee who has been in the UK since the age of 16. He lives in supported accommodation and has a support worker but his only relations are in Birmingham and he tries to visit them regularly. The £200 will pay for several bus journeys.*
- *We gave £150 to pay for a client’s child to attend a Saturday morning stage school. The client is a single mother on benefits with mental health problems and her little girl has a deformed foot. The classes are local to where they live and will help improve her confidence as well as her balance.*
- *We provided £300 to a client who was evicted by an abusive landlord and finally managed to secure a one-bedroom council flat where she feels safe, but it had no furniture. We have applied to another charity for additional funding.*
- *We gave one of our clients £150 to have his electricity meter removed. He was having to pay standing charges despite being a pre-pay customer so was accruing debts. Now the meter has been removed, we can help him manage his debts.*
- *We gave £300 to an Afghan refugee for a new mattress. He has back trouble as well as mental health issues and is trying to get settled so he can apply for family reunification. While he was happy to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand bed frame we felt a new mattress would make a real difference.*

- *We provided £300 for vinyl floor covering to a client who is a council tenant but has had persistent problems with flooding from the upstairs privately-owned flat. Vinyl offered a cost-effective solution and is easier to dry should further flooding occur.*
- *We gave £300 to a client to get a fridge freezer. This client has numerous health conditions and has been struggling financially since the breakdown of her marriage 2 years ago.*
- *We contributed £150 to a client who needs a new fridge and cooker. We have applied to another charity for the rest of the funds. The client lives alone, has mental health problems and has had cancer in the past. She is a part time student.*
- *Finally, we contributed £150 towards carpeting for a client who was evicted from a furnished private rental and moved into an unfurnished council property. She has two young children both with special needs. She managed to source some 2<sup>nd</sup> hand furniture but there are no carpets.*

The need is endless: should you feel moved to give to OxFAP, the website

[www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org)

gives information about how to donate. Or you could use the card-reader in the hall at 43.

## Believing and Belonging in Two Places

**Yvonne Dixon**

Is it possible to have two religious affiliations or ‘serve two masters’ as Jesus said?

During online Quaker worship in 2020 and especially 2021, my isolation as someone living alone and not in Oxford began to weigh heavily. I was painfully aware that some Friends in Oxford could still see each other outdoors, and I decided to build more resilient connections in Bicester and become less reliant on my car. I had worshipped happily at Headington LM for 20 years, but in January 2022 started to attend Wednesday meetings in Oxford, monthly combined Sunday worship and business meeting, and Emmanuel Church Bicester (ECB) on remaining Sundays.

My week now includes train journeys to Oxford on Wednesdays and the pleasure of walking to church on Sundays, which is a wonderful way to arrive ‘with heart and mind prepared’ and offers a chance to reflect on the message received on the way home. ECB was both strange and familiar as I had attended an evangelical church in my teens. The worship songs had changed, the sermons were shorter, and women were more evident as church leaders.

Aged 12 I had an intense experience of inviting Jesus into my life after hearing a visiting preacher at my school.

This faith lasted through my teens but did not survive my first two years at university. In the intervening years of non-belief, experimentation with other religions and gradual return to faith, I regarded that juvenile emotional response with some amusement and even scorn, but I evaluate it differently now, realising that I had a better adolescence as a result.

Reading the King James Bible on my own and later being allowed to attend church at the age of 14 gave me an inner fortitude, resilience and knowledge of being loved that saw me through family troubles and navigating an educational path within the very large (1600 students) northern comprehensive school that I attended.

Those experiences opened my heart to wider and more generous affiliations than some of the unpleasant values expressed within the right-wing white working class family that I grew up in. If my youthful conversion was a Damascus Road, the ensuing journey has been an Emmaus Road of gradual recognition and reconnection.

ECB is attended by people from all over the world and all walks of life. There are always many children and young people, who often run round the church freely and sometimes noisily for the first part of the service until the sermon, when they are provided with separate activities. There is sometimes an illuminated bubble tube inside a tent in which children can quietly sit or lie down. I imagine it must be a relief for parents of restless young children to be able to relax in such a permissive environment.

The sermons are of mixed quality and accompanied by slides on a large backdrop which I find slightly hypnotic. My favourite preacher is someone I knew when I was a Quaker prison chaplain and he was a prison officer before his ordination. During the singing and electronic music I often just sit and can attain a depth of silent worship comparable to a Quaker meeting. No-one minds this at all, and I find it easier in such an unstructured environment than perhaps in a more traditional service.

Coming to ECB in 2022 coincided with 'Living in Love and Faith', a pleasant-sounding name for considering the issue of same-sex marriage which is tearing the Church of England apart. There were some well-designed activities organized for this but I was dismayed by things I heard said within ECB, which is one of the most conservative churches and has one of the largest congregations in the Bicester and Islip deanery.

I spoke up and said I was old enough to remember similar disputes over women's ordination in the 1970s/80s when people were firing Biblical proof texts at each other to justify their positions, yet now women are everywhere in positions of ministry and leadership. I notice that I sometimes challenge more readily at ECB than in Quaker gatherings and wonder if this indicates a weaker or more secure sense of belonging.

It's hard to see many commonalities between the two faith communities but the beautiful practice of Godly Play has been used with children at ECB and in some Quaker meetings. My favourite group at ECB is the Contemplative Compline and I have also joined Forest Church and the Gospel Choir. I have made three or four really good friends who have enjoyed coming to St Giles to the Friendly Bible Study facilitated by Matt Rosen.

It's hard to imagine people from Oxford being enticed to visit ECB in return but I have written this as an *-apologia* to those Friends whose expressions range from amused disbelief to outright horror when I describe my dual belonging in these very different settings.



Image from <https://freerangestock.com/photos/112296/close-up-of-person-holding-another-persons-hands.html> under Creative Commons licence

## April Charity Appeal Palestine Peace-building Summit

Our special collection for April is not just unusual, it's unique. We are all only too aware of the devastating conflict in Palestine Israel at the moment. The roots go back many centuries but the present destruction of Gaza began with the brutal attack on Israel by Hamas in October 2023. The present situation is a massive challenge to all who, like Quakers, seek to build peace.

An event near London in July is gathering a distinctive group of people who feel called to rise to this challenge. They are particularly well-placed for a number of reasons and they include:

- Palestinian Christians who have deep roots in the region and who represent a range of traditions
- Theologians, activists and leaders from the Global South as well as the North who can bring and share their experience and perspective on peacebuilding

Rooted in respectful listening and deep theological reflection, the summit will create a space for robust dialogue allowing practitioners and scholars to compare insights, cross-pollinate tactics, and develop strategies for collaborative action to mobilize Christian people to foster a just peace in Palestine-Israel.



Photo of Jocabed Solano by Charles Worth

At Oxford Meeting we are privileged to have met two people from one of the groups that are collaborating globally to make this happen. About eighteen months ago Jocabed Solano, an indigenous woman from Panama, and Drew Jennings Grisham, an American living in Colombia, attended our Meeting while they were visiting Oxford. They lead an organisation called Memoria Indigena which works with indigenous Christians in Latin America. Our OX1 study group welcomed them to one of our meetings where they shared something of their work with us. They will be back in Oxford after the summit and plan to worship with us on Sunday July 27<sup>th</sup>. Come along and meet them!

Our April appeal is to support the Palestine Peace-building Summit. The organisations from the Global South that have committed to participating in London in July are not wealthy. They need funds to pay for people to travel to attend and contribute to this gathering. So they are seeking our financial support to enable key people from different cultures and backgrounds to attend.

**Memoria Indigena are hoping to raise funds so that Juana, an Aymara woman from Bolivia from a Quaker background, will be able to join this event.**

### Please Give Generously:

You can make a Gift-Aided contribution in support of this work through the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies:

<https://www.ocms.ac.uk/donate>

Please designate the gift to **"Peacebuilding Summit."**

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can increase your contribution's value by 25% at no extra cost by marking your gift as a Gift Aid donation

The website for the summit is here:

<https://peacebuilding2025.org/>

For more information, please contact Charles Worth on [ccworthox@gmail.com](mailto:ccworthox@gmail.com)

## Notices

**Re-roofing of the Meeting House** will continue for the next few weeks. The Meeting House will still be accessible but will be covered in scaffolding. From 8.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday there may be some noise in the Meeting House, but this should NOT affect 43. The car park will not be available 8.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday and at other times space will be limited. If possible, please don't use the car park, the rear entrance or the back garden. If you must do so, please take great care.

**Welcomers are still needed** for 11.00 Meetings for Worship on Sundays. If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Paul Fine ([paul.fine@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:paul.fine@lshtm.ac.uk) or 07854 618146)

**Send-off for Virginia Allport.** On Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April we'll have a celebratory cake during the bring-and-share lunch to mark Virginia Allport's many years of service for the children and young people of Oxford Meeting. We would love to invite f/Friends who attended Oxford Meeting as children and who would have known Virginia to the 11.00 Meeting and to the lunch. If you have family or friends who may have attended the children's meeting in the past, please send their contact details to Madeleine

[Madeleine.Reeves@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Madeleine.Reeves@compas.ox.ac.uk)

...so that we can be sure to invite them.

There will be an **annual gathering of Christ-centred Friends** in York on the afternoon of Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> May. It will include worship together, a 'meeting for learning', and some time for discernment. If you would like to attend, please write to Mark Dibben of Faringdon Meeting at [QuakersinChrist@gmail.com](mailto:QuakersinChrist@gmail.com).

**A Memorial Meeting for Worship** to celebrate the life of our dear Friend, Marieke Faber Clarke, will be held on Saturday 14th June at 2pm at Oxford Quaker Meeting, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW. We are unable to offer parking.

The Meeting will last for about an hour, and Marieke's friends and family are invited to stand and share their memories of her during this time. Tea will be served in our garden room after the conclusion of the Meeting for Worship.

Jill Green



*In the garden of 43 by Caroline Worth*

## Diary

**Friends' Fellowship of Healing** will meet in the Garden Room on Wednesday, 2nd April at 1.30 pm.

**The Treading Lightly Group** will meet in the Garden Room on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm. This is a small group of older Friends living on their own who meet once a month to support one another. To find out more, contact Jane MacTaggart on 01865 558555.

**Berks & Oxon Regional Meeting**  
(Theme: *Reparations: What do love and justice require of British Quakers now? How should we act, and why?*) 5th April, 10:30-16:00. Jordans Friends' Meeting House, Beaconsfield HP9 2SN and online. Contact: [office@jordansquakercentre.org](mailto:office@jordansquakercentre.org)

**Local Meeting for Worship for Business:**  
6th April, 11:45am, Meeting House

**Quaker Bible Study** will meet on 11th April, from 7–9pm in the Library and on the Meeting for Worship Zoom link. We will be reading Ephesians from 1:22.

## Conversations about Contemporary

**Quakerism** (for Friends from East Midlands, Thames Valley, Northamptonshire, Luton, Leighton, Hertford and Hitchin) 17 April, 12-1pm, on Zoom.

Register:

<https://quaker.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEKdeYurjwjGNfKs5QT2MoSeBaSnJ1ySTao#/registration>

**Bring and Share Lunch** (with opportunity to say goodbye to Virginia and Alan Allport): 27th April, 12:15, Garden Room

## Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM)

(National meeting of Young Adult Friends age 18-35): 2nd-5th May, Redland Friends' Meeting House, 126 Hampton Rd, Redland, Bristol BS6 6JE

<https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/event/yfgm-may-2025-bristol/>

**Forest Foxes** (adventure in the woods and around a fire, for friendship and fun for young people age 10-12): Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, 3 May 2025 2-4.30. Contact [juliad@quaker.org.uk](mailto:juliad@quaker.org.uk) to book by 25 April.

**Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting** (Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs in the morning; spiritual nurture session in the afternoon). 10th May 10:30am-3:00pm. Faringdon Friends' Meeting House, 4 Lechlade Road, Faringdon SN7 8AQ

<https://osamquakers.org.uk/about-osam/>

## International conscientious objectors day:

there will be an event on Thursday May 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm in Bonn Square. We will honour those who seek another path in place of violence and war, with readings and songs. All are welcome.

## Regular Events

**Beansprouts Children's Meeting** (for children under 4): Every Sunday, 10:30 on first Sunday of the month, 11:00 on other Sundays, Long Room

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/beansprouts/>

**Sunflowers Children's Meeting** (worship for school-age children). Theme for April is **simplicity**. Every Sunday, 10:30 on first Sunday of the month, 11:00 on other Sundays, Long Room

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/sunflowers/>

**Tea Cake and Play** (weekly chat and fun session for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups): Every Tuesday 10:00-12:00, Meeting House.

[playgroupsupport@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:playgroupsupport@oxfordquakers.org)

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/baby-and-toddler-group/>

## Looking further ahead:

**Britain Yearly Meeting** with a theme of *Peace* (including children's programmes and Junior Yearly Meeting): 23-26 May 2025, Friends House (London), and online.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>

**Junior Gathering** (for young people aged 11 to 14) and **Senior Conference** (for young people aged 15-18) are Quaker residential gatherings for young people from across the South of England. 23rd-30th August 2025

<https://fsse.org.uk>

**World Quaker Day** Theme: *Love Your Neighbour* (Galatians 5:14). Sunday 5th October 2025

<https://fwcc.world/worldquakerday/>



## Berks and Oxon Regional Meeting

Theme: *The heart of the Quaker Way*. Speaker: Ben Pink Dandelion, Honorary Professor of Quaker Studies and Director of the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, University of Birmingham. 18th October 2025, Swindon Friends' Meeting House

## Volunteering

Children and Young People's Committee (CYPC) are always in need of adult volunteers to support the children's meetings, 'Tea, Cake and Play' and other events in various roles. Please speak to a member of CYPC to find out more. We will need to organise an Enhanced DBS check and take up references before you can volunteer to work with children.

### Quaker Videos in this Month's Forty-Three

Common Quaker Names (surnames this time!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4HYE1pToIE>



### From Quaker Faith & Practice 23.02

#### Social Responsibility: Faith and Action

*True godliness doesn't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it... Christians should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not meanly steal out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin.*

*William Penn, 1682*

## April 2025

Many meetings and events are held via Zoom. Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyYzZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the Office for more details:

Email: [office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org) Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

### OXFORD MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are in person. Zoom connections are available only when indicated.

For more information, contact the Office at

[office@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:office@oxfordquakers.org) +44 (0)1865 557373

#### First Sunday of each month:

Meeting for Worship 10:30-11:30 (in person & Zoom)

MfW for Business 12:15 (in person & Zoom)

#### All other Sundays:

Meetings for Worship 09:30-10:15 (in person and Zoom)

11:00-12:00 (in person and Zoom)

#### Monday:

Young Adult Friends 19:00-21:00 (in person and Zoom)

#### Tuesday:

Meeting for Worship followed by breakfast 07:30-08:00

#### Wednesday:

Meeting for Worship followed by lunch 11:45-12:30

#### Thursday:

Meeting for Worship followed by breakfast 07:30-08:00



Spring Photo by Nicole Gilroy

**Forty-Three** is available online at

<https://oxfordquaker.com/newsletter/>

and on the Oxford Quakers website,

<https://oxfordquaker.com/>

The views expressed in **Forty-Three** do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

#### Editorial Team

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### HEADINGTON MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Headington Meeting meets each Sunday at 10:00  
at Old Headington Village Hall,  
Dunstan Road, Headington, OX3 9BY

For full details see

<https://headington.quakermeeting.org/>

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**Please send newsletter contributions by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the submission deadline.**

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to [newsletter@oxfordquakers.org](mailto:newsletter@oxfordquakers.org) or a paper copy can be left in the office pigeonhole of any editor.

For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit [www.oxfordquakers.org](http://www.oxfordquakers.org).