



Faringdon Quaker Meeting

NEWSLETTER 139 August to September 25

News, Events, and Reflections – Summer/Autumn 2025

Meeting Affairs

Shared Lunch will take place on Sunday 2nd August.

Our Meeting for Business for Worship on Sunday 7th September.

Area & Regional Meetings

The next Area Meeting is on Sunday 14th September 2025, from 10:15 to 15:00, at the Abingdon Community Support Centre, hosted by Abingdon Quakers. Join us for Meeting for Worship at 10:15am; Area Meeting follows in the afternoon. Refreshments will be provided—please bring your own lunch.

The Regional Meeting will be held on Saturday 18th October at Swindon Meeting House, from 10:30am for an 11:00am start, concluding at 4:30pm. The day features “The Heart of the Quaker Way”, a course led by Ben Pink Dandelion. To register, email Elspeth Wollen (elspethwollen@gmail.com) and indicate whether you will be attending in person or online. If you plan to bring children, please let us know by 6th September so arrangements can be made.

Community Events

Book, Cake & Play Day is happening on 30th August from 12–4pm at the Friends Meeting House, raising funds for Lend with Care, which provides microloans for businesses in the global south.

On Sunday 10th August, Churches Together in Faringdon invite you to Lunch in the Garden at 19 Coxwell Road, SN77EB, from 12:30 for a 1pm meal—please bring ready-to-eat food to share. Ride and Stride is set for Saturday 13th September.

Readings & Rotas

August readers:

- 3rd – Shirley
- 10th – Mark
- 17th – Andrea
- 24th – Sue
- 31st – Emma

September readers:

- 7th – Val
- 14th – Simon
- 21st – Paul
- 27th – Gill and Trish

Collections

If you have suggestions for collections, please speak to our treasurer. All suggestions will be compiled and brought to meeting for a decision.

- August's collection supports Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT). [CAAT - Donate](#)
- September's collection is for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Fund. [Donate - Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust](#)

Study Group

Thank you to Simon for leading the 13th of July study session based on David Johnstone's "A Quaker Prayer Life", which explored early Quaker prayer. The next session, on Sunday 21st September, features Andrea discussing her work with Lifelines, an organisation corresponding with people on death row.

Appreciation

We express our gratitude to Elspeth Wollen, who steps down as OSAM clerk, for her caring leadership, keen sense of right ordering, and attention to detail. Thanks also to Jennifer Barraclough, whose spirit, wisdom, and practical skills have graced nine years as OSAM trustee, including service as treasurer and clerk to trustees.

Prayer for Peace

In June and July, we gathered in the Faringdon Market Place for an hour of public witness and prayer for peace, joined by Faringdon Peace Group members and others, holding in the Light all those suffering through war. Prayer for Peace will pause in August, except for the Peace Group meeting on 30th August, and resumes monthly on Saturday 27th September.



Reflections: “Light Reading” by John Lampen (from *The Friend*, 11 July 2025) chosen by Val

Light Reading by John Lampen

What do we think we are doing when we ‘hold someone in the Light’? If this phrase, simply means sending them supportive approving thoughts does it really deserve its place amongst Quakers as one of your most frequent spiritual practises? Or should we understand it differently?

George Fox commended Jesus’ command to pray for our enemies, and he used a significant phrase ‘they that imprisoned the truth and quenched the spirit in themselves, would imprison it and quench it [in others]’. I take it that he is saying that there is that of God in the persecutor and wrongdoer as much as anyone else; but they have locked it up tightly inside themselves to prevent it influencing them. In consequence they often attack the freedoms of those whose views offend them.

In my own case, if I try to hold Vladimir Putin in the Light, it doesn’t mean I commend his beliefs or actions; it is my way of praying that God will free the imprisoned divine Seed in him, to convince him of the harm he is doing, and show him a way to give up the wrongness.

My friend Mary McAleese once said to me that prayer is the Christian’s secret weapon. Using it in this way I don’t see why any Quaker should say I am doing wrong, even if they do nothing and believe it can never be successful. The power of prayer is impossible to prove, but even if my prayer doesn’t change the other, it may alter *me* by making me think in a more constructive way about them – without in any way excusing them the harm they are doing. If I were to say, “I can never pray for so-and-so, not even to pray that they will change’ it shifts the problem from the other person to myself. What is it in me which insists on having an enemy at all costs? Am I not becoming to be like them? I am starting to mirror the way they employ the rhetoric of ‘our enemies’, using this to justify the terrible things they do.

And isn’t it arrogance to be certain that we know what can or cannot happen? A paramilitary leader once described Ian Paisley to me as ‘a man who will fight to the last drop of everyone else’s blood’. But Paisley experienced a near-fatal illness and when he recovered, he was convinced that God had saved him to give him a change of bringing peace to Northern Ireland. And he achieved this, in a way that no other person in his community could have done. This does not prove the power of prayer; but it does suggest that ‘with God, all things are possible’. We can do no harm by reflecting, honestly and painfully, on our own complicity in what is amiss – and by holding in the Light, in love and hope, the people whose responsibility for it is greater.

Let Your Light Shine



Emma's lino print "Let Your Light Shine" has raised £80 so far for Medical Aid for Palestine.

An Afterword:

On July 13th, Mark contributed an afterword with a rendering of Psalm 23:

The Lord is my Shepherd – relating to relationship.

I shall not want – referring to supply.

He makes me lie down in green pastures – indicating rest.

He leads me beside still waters – signifying refreshment.

He restores my soul – denoting healing.

He leads me in the right paths – meaning guidance.

For his name's sake – concerning purpose.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – associated with testing.

I fear no evil – representing protection.

For you are with me – reflecting faithfulness.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me – describing discipline.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies – expressing hope.

You anoint my head with oil – concerning consecration.

My cup overflows – illustrating abundance.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life – indicating blessing.

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord – addressing security.

All the days of my Life – referring to eternity.

Thank you all for your valuable contributions

Simon

