

Malvern Quaker Meeting



Newsletter

August/September 2022

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 30th September.

Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website www.malvernquakers.org.uk.

If you are not on the Meeting's email list and would like to be, or have changed your email, please contact clerks@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

Lifepath 2022

Helen and Geoff Richardson

Every year, Churches Together Malvern organise Lifepath – a week of school children visiting Malvern Priory. Here is an extract from a report from new volunteer helpers.

Taking part in Lifepath 2022 was a truly wonderful experience. As new recruits, we really appreciated how well Lifepath was organised, and it felt a safe environment for both the volunteers and the children and teachers who would be welcomed in. There was a designated prayer leader who was available all the time to pray for, or with, any volunteer who had concerns for themselves or for a child with whom they were working.

We were both given helping roles, on some days as Pilgrim Guides, taking a group of children and their teacher from one activity to another, and on other days as Activity Helpers. Each morning the whole team met together to get instructions for the day, and then one member shared a favourite passage of scripture and its impact on their path of life. These devotional talks were most encouraging.

The top classes from three or four local primary schools arrived at the Priory each morning with their teachers; some started their 'pilgrimage' by coming on foot. So through the week over 500 children were welcomed to the Priory by Pilgrim Guides and flag waving members of the team. In the whole group sessions, we all sang wonderful action songs, learned about the history of the Priory, and watched a play based on the parable of the talents and the TV show, the Apprentice. Everyone loved it and laughed at the comedy, but also learned to recognise that we all have talents to be used and not buried.

The children enthusiastically took part in various activities relating to how life in the Priory was in medieval times. This included the *Prayer Journey*, which we both helped with on different days. It was amazing to see how all the children were engaged in this activity, writing prayers of thanks, sorry and please, and learning about God's love through different mediums. This was such a peaceful place. At the debrief, after we waved goodbye to the children, the children's prayers posted in boxes were anonymously offered up to God. We were also told about prayers brought during the day and challenges that had been faced and overcome.

We had such a great time, interacting with members of many churches in and around Malvern, all contributing to bringing the message of the love of God to the children. We both warmly applaud all the organisers - and without hesitation we recommend the experience to others.

Advices and Queries No 6

Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the Bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the ways of God. As you learn from others, can you in turn give freely from what you have gained? While respecting the experiences and opinions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have found and what you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and with greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.

Ukrainian Afternoons at Meeting House Liz Flanagan

It has been an amazing summer in Malvern, and especially at 2 Orchard Road. Here in the hot weather the outdoor space has been full of highly active children chasing, footballing, skateboarding, playing with sand, water, Duplo, etc. Last Monday our worshipping space was full of youngsters Lego building, playing snap, Uno, table tennis, small world play, reading, shop building.

I think several miracles were involved: firstly that these children and their mothers had safely arrived from Ukraine and had been offered homes by local people: secondly that all our play materials had been donated by friends, neighbours and strangers using Freecycle: thirdly that this elderly meeting had, three times a week since June, set up all the play facilities and supervised the children so that they were able to play safely, and then, exhausted, had tidied away, swept and vacuumed and left the space ready for Meeting. . Oh yes, and there were homemade cakes each afternoon!

A huge thank you and well done to everyone who supported this initiative, gave the children such fun and the mothers a break to attend English classes on site.

Photos from Ukrainian Afternoons



Special Collections

The total that Richard Bartholomew is forwarding to Quaker Social Action is £190.25. This is in addition to the amount Melanie sent to them after the funeral of Muriel Cadman-Hope. They have written to thank us for our donation, giving examples of how their work helps impoverished and vulnerable people

Pastoral Care in our Local Meeting

Jill Etheridge

There has been a long history among Quakers of having 'Overseers' whose chief responsibility is ensuring that there is pastoral care available for all members and attenders. We were glad locally when a new term was sought, because many did not like the continuing use of a word with unfortunate connotations; though of course some like the link with tradition also!

For some years now the pastoral care in our meeting has been facilitated by forming small groups of approximately five people in each. People come and people go; and some say 'I didn't know anything about this!' – so it seems a good idea to explain the system in the Newsletter from time to time. Until recently we have had four Pastoral Carers in our Meeting, each being the contact person for two of the small groups. Currently they are Hugh McMichael, Jill Etheridge (in combined role as Elder) and Jon Knight. (Judith Badman is awaiting a response at the next Area Meeting to her request to be released from her joint role.)

If you are wondering why each Pastoral Carer has two small groups of about five people, rather than one of ten, the reason is as follows: When this scheme was first adopted, Meeting hoped to encourage each member of a group to get to know the other four or so, perhaps a little better than they might know others in meeting generally and, in an unobtrusive way, keep an eye out for them. For instance, if they had noticed someone missing from Meeting for a few weeks, they might choose to telephone to ask if the person was alright. If any individual is experiencing difficult times and would like the kind of help that people from Meeting might be able to give, or if someone wishes to apply for funding for a Woodbrooke course, the officially appointed Pastoral Carer is, as it were, the reference contact. Much has changed since the start of the pandemic, so the get-togethers that have sometimes been arranged for the groups have not happened for a good while. The amount of contact is up to the people themselves. There is no single right way of doing Pastoral Care, as what suits one does not necessarily suit another!

It was felt undesirable to post a list of the group names in the premises (Data protection?), but people obviously need to know which group they are in, and with whom. When Pastoral Carers meet after the summer break, they will address this.

In the meantime, here is some good old-fashioned guidance from *Quaker Faith and Practice*:

12.18 *Nor would we limit the performance of these duties to those who occupy such stations; we are all to watch over one another for good and to be mutually interested one for another, being united together.....* Yearly Meeting in London 1851

12.19 *.....an earnest concern has prevailed that all may take their right share in the privilege of watching over one another for good.* Yearly Meeting in London 1871

From 'Witness to the World', a vigil in remembrance and prayer, held in the grounds of Great Malvern Priory on Saturday 6th August 2022

UNIVERSAL PRAYER FOR PEACE FOR ALL FAITHS:

Lead us from Death to Life,

From Falsehood to Truth.

Lead us from Despair to Hope,

From Fear to Trust.

Lead us from Hate to Love,

From War to Peace.

Let Peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe,

Peace, Peace, Peace.

The blessing: a Franciscan benediction

May God bless us with discomfort...

*at easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts. **Amen***

May God bless us with anger...

at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,

*so that we may work for justice, equality and peace. **Amen***

May God bless us with tears...

*to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain to joy. **Amen***

And May God bless us with the foolishness...

to think that we can make a difference in the world,

*so that we will do things which others tell us cannot be done. **Amen***

*Let us bless the Lord: **thanks be to God.***

Blessing, honour and glory be yours, here and everywhere, now and forever. Amen

Message from Malvern Welcomes

Tony Vere

On behalf of Malvern Welcomes I write to thank you for your generous grant of £2000, to assist in resettling refugees in our local community. As you know, unless requested, donations are not specifically channelled to a particular aspect of our work. However, at any particular time there are priority activities making major calls on our resources.

In 2021/22, the major part of our expenditure (~£15000) was directed towards installing our third Community Sponsored family who arrived on 4th November 2021. A breakdown of this is given in the financial statement attached.

One other major outlay since life began to return to something approaching normal after the pandemic has been funding resettled families to participate in local life, by encouraging participation in local community activities, particularly those promoting health and mental well-being. We have budgeted £4000, to subsidise membership of our local swimming pool (The Splash) and other local sports and community clubs. (There is added community benefit here, as the money also supports the continuation of these clubs and societies)

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). ESOL is a tremendously important aspect of our work as command of basic English is so vital to employment. Unfortunately, short-term objectives and targets in the Department of Work and Pensions are driving Job Centres to demand that refugees seek early employment in jobs that require little English. Once in such low-paid jobs there is little opportunity or incentive to continue studying.

Your grant has contributed substantially to our work in these three key areas. I hope that you will feel that the money has been well spent. You have been a major contributor, both financially and in the personal involvement of your members, to our organisation throughout its eight years of operation, and this is much appreciated.

Woodbrooke Update

Melanie Jameson

It is noticeable that Woodbrooke's news updates now divide considerations of this much-loved venue into two parts: Woodbrooke Learning (much of it on-line) and Woodbrooke Site.

The former is going from strength to strength, the latter is facing a financial shortfall due to essential maintenance work. Post-Covid, it has not been viable to fully re-staff while there was uncertainty about visitor numbers, in particular the Woodbrooke B&B offer. However, the self-catering units remain available and I understand that nearby Colleges have been able to make use of some facilities. However, when Quakers in Criminal Justice made a booking for our 2024 conference, this was accepted without conditions.

So, it seems to be a matter of 'Watch this Space'.

Active Peace Education

Liz Flanagan

We have invited all the Quaker peace educationalists to Go APE in Malvern.

On Saturday 8th October we will be entertaining, and learning from, Friends in education from North Wales, Stockport, Leeds, London and beyond.

We are planning to offer drinks on arrival and afternoon tea and cakes at 4pm. They will be bringing their own lunches. If any wish to stay overnight and join us for Worship next morning, there will be a hot meal at 6pm.

I am hoping that the meeting can support this by providing drinks and cakes, and even beds. The Dell House have already offered 2 double rooms at a reduced cost. I have a spare single room.

Please let me know how you can help with this new venture. Join us and learn more about peace education in Britain today.